

The Unknown Hunter

by Marlin Troyer

As I walked carefully through the ankle high corn, I was startled to find what I was looking for. In the ensuing days I turned the arrowhead endlessly over in my hands. It linked me directly to an ancient hunter that probably lived before Jesus' time on earth. That person had been hunting about a hundred yards from my mailbox.

The arrowhead was probably sourced from outside my immediate area, maybe fifty miles away. A rock had been carefully studied and then, with what I would assume was considerable skill, made into various tools and then lastly, an arrowhead. Looking at the arrowhead I find it hard to believe that the man who fashioned it was a simple man incapable of complex thought. It makes me ponder the life of this hunter who hunted my neighborhood and woods long before I.

What did he think about when he chipped away at the flint? Who did he curse at when it broke in ways he was not expecting? What was his relationship to the animals he hunted and those he hunted with? As winter crept in did he have anxious thoughts about survival and death? Did he worry about his children's future? Was his soul full of darkness reveling in deeds of revenge and hatred or did he in anguish work for peace? How much of the light, that lights all men who come into the world, did he pursue? What effect did Spring have on him?

Christian concepts of meeting our loved ones in heaven fire our imaginations with intrigue and hope. Similarly, to me, the hunter is not dead and gone but living in some existence outside of time. If there will be redeemed from every tribe, tongue and nation (Rev 7:9-17) reveling in heaven, will those from thousands of years ago till tomorrow be included?

And so the redeemer awaits both of us as we come to eternity. The power of relationships both to our creator and to the eternal souls of others we journeyed with have forever made their imprint. Which blood covenant we choose will be pivotal for our new existence.

Will the ancient hunter and I meet face to face? I hope so and yet our shared histories, where they seem to intersect, is one of blood, disease and displacement. It makes me uneasy. Questions of how I came to live here instead of his

"children" will be difficult. To suggest to him that it worked out as the Creator designed it from the beginning might leave me indefensible at the worst time. Especially with the Judge of eternity standing right there and me mocking what he had designed and longed for so deeply.

The link between the ancient hunter and the native Americans we came to know might not have been one of direct lineage. Neither was it free of bloodshed, disease or displacement before "white men" came. It seems I need to be honest about the history and actions of the "white man" who settled this area and view my own Mennonite history as one of an uneasy alliance.

Does Jesus' blood covenant of reciprocal forgiveness become impinged, frustrated, and even blocked if I become too culpable in the daily and historical fierce river of blood rushing the other way toward judgment? That fierce river not only seems to hold our world as we know it together, but demands our approval (Rev. 18:24).

My disapproval seems also to invite judgment, and asks if I am any better as I work hard to make my way in the present world (Lk 11:47-51). Historically our forefathers were very careful in voicing disapproval and their lives were more precarious. But I long to work towards a peace that I value here and treasure in the next life. They are connected, are they not?

I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the son of God and those who hear will live. Jn 5:25 (NIV)

He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit. Return to your fortress, O prisoners of hope; even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you. Zec 9:10b-12 (NIV)

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