

ASC Revised August 11, 2013 G. G. West

We do not often think of things that do not already exist but many have been able to imagine past what is visible. President Kennedy said just 20 days after the first space launch that we could put a man on the moon before the end of the decade and we did. Walt Disney envisioned Disneyland and Disneyworld and died before Disneyworld came into existence. He could see rides, turnstiles and people having fun where only groves and swamps existed in the case of Disneyworld. Thomas Edison imagined the light bulb long before he made one after much experimentation and he also believed that such a thing would change the world. He was right.

We Christians are sometimes looked down upon because we believe in a world which we have not seen but one which is prominent in our faith.

This past week, I watched a movie called *Stolen Summer* made in 2002 starring two young boys in addition to Aiden Quinn and Kevin Pollak. The premise of the movie was that the son of Aiden Quinn being a Roman Catholic boy in a family of eight children wanted to help not only himself but also the only son of Kevin Pollak who played a rabbi get into heaven. These two boys were on a faith journey. The two families came into contact with each other when Aiden Quinn, a fireman, saved the rabbi's son from a house fire. We later learn the rabbi's son had a terminal disease which only added to the plot. The Roman Catholic boy who did not receive Communion because of his age was told by his priest that he needed to be tested before he could receive the Body of Christ to insure his entry into heaven. And so he decided that he would make up a tough decathlon type test that the two boys must pass to make the grade.

In the movie the stumbling block was a swim to a buoy in Lake Michigan and back. The rabbi's son had trouble with this last test.

The two families lived in very different worlds and a clash seemed to be inevitable. A shiva was held for the woman who died in the house fire and when Aiden Quinn showed up for the event he was asked if he would like something to which he first replied, "a scotch." And after getting a disappointing response, he said, "a beer would do." I found it almost uncomfortable watching that scene—it was a shiva NOT an Irish wake!!

And in the rabbi's family the son made the sign of the cross during the blessing before a meal. This was understandably a great issue with the rabbi's wife.

The rabbi's son did finally pass the test and was in the hospital dying from the return of leukemia, Aiden Quinn's son was caught by the priest in the sacristy taking a host from the closet because he felt he must give his friend what would help him entrance into heaven. The priest did catch him and told him that the host had not been consecrated which obviously the boy did not understand. In the end the priest let him take it to his friend. Unfortunately, he was too late at the hospital because the boy had died.

The movie is a very touching story about faith. How do we believe what we cannot see. We believe because we are assured of things for which we can only hope.

We too are conflicted. Sometimes it is hard to say we believe in Jesus who said he did not come to

bring peace but instead a sword. He came to comfort the afflicted while at the same time afflicting the comfortable. How can we love him and hate our mothers and fathers, our sisters and brothers? How can we love our enemies? It is very hard to get our minds around such thoughts and it was hard for Jews of the first century to do it also.

How can we come here on Sundays and worship a homeless man and then leave here ignoring the homeless outside of these walls the rest of the week?

How do we respond to Jesus when it comes to the way we live? We want to be people of faith but there is also a feeling of anxiety or fear in the mix.

We might be worried about money issues: how will we be able to pay for college for our kids or will we be able to save enough for retirement and if we are retired will there be enough to continue living.

Some of us are worried about health issues. We are not getting any younger and the body seems to be falling apart or we might be worried about health issues of our aging parents or young children. Will we be able to cope with the unknowns in our lives?

Jesus does not make us feel any better when he says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Is that supposed to make us feel good or guilty? We need comfort. In the end, our faith calls us to action in spite of our anxieties and fears.

A somewhat rebellious Episcopal priest who turned 90 this past June named Malcolm Boyd published a book of prayers in 1965 “Are You Running With Me, Jesus?”

It’s morning, Jesus,

It’s morning, and here’s that light and sound all over again.

I’ve got to move fast ...get into the bathroom, wash up,

Grab a bit to eat, and run some more.

I just don’t feel like it, Lord. What I really want to do is get back into bed, pull up the covers, and sleep,

And here I’ve got to run all over again.

Where am I running? You know these things I can’t understand. It’s not that I need to have you tell me.

What counts most is just that somebody knows, And it’s you.

That helps a lot.

So I’ll follow along, okay?

But lead, Lord.

Now I’ve got to run.

Are you running with me, Jesus?

According to Luke, to run with Jesus does not require that we need a lot of stuff. The stuff will only slow us down. We just need to be ready and he will call. Let pray that he will be with us as we run through life. Amen.