

PASTOR'S PATCH

Human Endeavour



***A Moche Pot depicting a soldier
(British Museum)***

One of the most interesting books I peruse from time to time is the British Museum's "***A History of the World in 100 Objects***", authored by Neil Macgregor.

One of the artifacts chosen for this book is a pottery statue of a soldier created by the Moche people, of what is now Peru. Their civilisation survived from around the time that Rome came to prominence (200 BC) to the Islamic conquests (650 AD).

The Moche civilisation was extremely advanced. As far as is known their main settlement was near the southern outskirts

of modern-day Trujillo and it had streets, canals, plazas and industrial areas. It was maybe the first real "city" in the whole of South America.

Their culture was fairly brutal by all accounts and findings so far. It's also possible that climate change at that time and in that place is what caused their total destruction, due to their delicate balance of farming (both animals and grains) being overwhelmed.

What is so striking here is that despite cultural differences, human endeavour remains constant: war, needs to adapt to climate, attempts to build society, spiritual needs, and the attempts to placate "god" (whatever that might entail).

See any similarities here to our modern culture? Christianity however is unique. We pray for our enemies. We lay down our lives for our neighbours. We strive to care for the planet. We aim at a society centred on love. We do not set out to placate God. We confess our sins to a living God and the Christ-child, whose birth we celebrate this Christmas, takes the cradle and transforms it into a cross and salvation becomes a gift of God to us, to those who are unable to save themselves.

"It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives within me." (Galatians 2:20)

Christ calls us to turn from purely human endeavour and to seek the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives, this Christmas, and every future day of our lives, in whatever era and culture we find ourselves.

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