

Commentary — From the Margins

The Downhill Flow

Part Two

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As I drove across North Dakota at less than the speed limit because of the weight carried by the pickup, I listened to Christian pastors [mostly] that displayed a level of ignorance about the Jesus narrative, about John’s vision, and about the epistles of Paul that was appalling ... I repeatedly asked myself, did they sincerely believe what they were saying (I hoped not), or were their words uttered merely because their listening audience expected to hear these words? I couldn’t tell. For not since I read in Ken Kesey’s novel, *Sometimes a Great Notion* (1964), about the Stammers putting a baby bottle nipple over the muzzle of a .22 rifle to silence the shot when poaching a deer have I encountered such imbecilic nonsense.

I grew up on the Oregon Coast, in the next river drainage north of where the “Stammer house” was built for the movie. Third-graders, fourth-graders on the school bus talked about putting a bottle nipple over the muzzle of a .22. By the time students were in fifth-grade (about when boys got their first .22), all of us knew that a nipple over the muzzle didn’t work. Not all of us knew that the super-sonic velocity “crack” of high-velocity .22 longrifle ammo couldn’t be silenced, but all of us knew that the nipple went flying off and contributed nothing to quieting the shot. A baby bottle nipple isn’t a suppressor (a word we did not then know: we spoke in terms of *silencers*).

Knowing the difference between a “silencer” and a “suppressor” is part of an ongoing evolution of knowledge within the shooting community. Being able to discuss “knowledge” smeared on the “event horizon” of a black hole is part of an ongoing evolution of knowledge within the scientific community. Yet there is no apparent corresponding evolution of knowledge within the theological community: it is as if Christian theologians, apologists, teachers and pastors remain trapped in the 4th-Century CE; certainly trapped in no century later than the 16th-Century ... to its shame, greater Christendom has not grown in grace and knowledge for centuries.

What I heard on one Christian broadcast after another Christian broadcast was fiction, as much fiction as Ken Kesey, in *Sometimes a Great Notion*, having a hound being bitten by a rattlesnake (there are no rattlers on the Coast) or chasing gray foxes with hounds (there are no gray foxes). On the central Oregon Coast, where Kesey sets his novel, hounds chase bears or raccoons, not foxes which would be a food source for the abundance of coyotes present. But there were no foxes in the coastal rain forest: if a hunter living on the Coast wanted to hunt foxes he or she would have had to cross the Coast Range and hunt in the Willamette Valley. I had to go to the Tualatin area to find a fox that would answer a varmint call ... Kesey lived in the Eugene/Springfield area, where there are foxes. And he wrote *Sometimes a Great Notion* [which the novel is] while living in the San Francisco Bay area; so for me, having graduated from Rose Lodge grade school [Lincoln County] and Taft High [Lincoln City, Oregon], Kesey’s lack of accuracy about the Coast broke my suspension of disbelief. As a literary critic, I could/can see what he attempted—Kesey describes the

patriarch of the Stamper clan, Henry, in terms that suggest a leather bound Bible—but as a Sabbatarian Christian, I find my sympathies align more with Ken Kesey’s father, Fred, founder of the Eugene Farmers Cooperative, than with Ken. I’m willing to challenge Scripture, but I’m not willing to compromise a truly great notion, doing what is right and good even when no one (not even God, if that were possible) is looking.

All of the broadcasters I heard that long night driving across Montana were using the Christian Bible as canonized in the 4th-Century CE as their source text, but it was as if none of them had actually “read” the Bible, taking time to closely read the text as I did Ken Kesey’s novel in a graduate Fiction Forms course ... it was as if these pastors read the Bible with the eleven-second attention span of a cat, being unable to remember what they read three verses previous, let alone in another epistle or another Gospel.

If a Christian apologist is unwilling to deconstruct Scripture, how is it that this apologist has the gall to “teach” others what he or she is unwilling to teach to the apologist’s own self? How is it that the Christian apologist who has set him or herself up as a “teacher” but who remains unwilling to treat Scripture as the apologist would any other book has enough knowledge to teach anyone—

The Bible isn’t the Word of God, Christ Jesus is ... *In primacy was the Logos, and the Logos was with/of [pros] the God [ton Theon], and God [Theos, no definite article] was the Logos* (John 1:1). And this “Logos” who made all things physical (*v.* 3) entered His creation as His unique Son (John 3:16), the man Jesus of Nazareth (John 1:14). There would be no knowledge of “the God” [God the Father] if this Logos, the Beloved of the God, had not brought knowledge of Him to His, Jesus’, first disciples (John chap 17); for possession of indwelling eternal life, according to the Jesus of John’s Gospel, comes with knowing the only true God [one deity], and knowing Christ Jesus [a second deity] whom the true God sent into this world to complete the creation; that is to complete the bridge spanning the gulf between this physical world and the heavenly realm ... *and this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent* (John 17:3).

Every Christian has the choice of believing the Logos [*’o Logos*], the Word of God that was God and was with the God before the foundations of the world were laid—*And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed* (John 17:5)—or believing the Christian’s local pastor, local theological expert, local apologist that has never even entertained the “notion” of deconstructing the Bible, opening the book to find lacunae; opening the book to examine what is actually bound between leather covers that function as a black leather hat and leather boots.

Greater Christendom has transformed the Bible into an idol, not an easily accomplished trick but one pulled off a very long time ago by charlatans and ever since practiced by generations of minions, each juggling words and their meanings, careful not to permit their audiences to realize that the wrong meanings have been assigned to the words.

If personal salvation hinges on the biblical narrative, then it would seem important that “Christians” actually read the book allegedly supporting their belief paradigm. Do Christians believe that any text other than the Bible supports salvation? Latter Day Saints [Mormons] add the *Book of Mormon* to the Bible, plus *Doctrines and Covenants* and *The Pearl of Great Price* ... Latter Day Saints maintain, with retention of the office of “Prophet,” an open theological canon. As additional revelation occurs, this revelation becomes part of the LDS doctrinal canon.

The majority of greater Christendom rejects the concept of an open doctrinal canon, and by doing so, rejects additional revelation; rejects even a hypertext addition to the canon—a text generated only in the mind of the Christian truly born of spirit ...

Question, one easily answered: When was the spirit given to the first disciples? If you answer, Pentecost, what are you; what is a Christian pastor to make of John's Gospel, and of John's Jesus coming to His disciples on the afternoon of the day of the Wave Sheaf Offering [as Sadducees reckoned when the first ripe sheaf, handful, of barley was to be waved], and saying,

On the evening of that day, the [first after the Sabbath], the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. *As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.*" And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "*Receive [spirit holy]. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.*" (John 20:19–23 emphasis added)

Did not the first disciples receive the Holy Spirit on the day of the Wave Sheaf Offering, the day following the weekly Sabbath within the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread? Did not the early harvest of human persons begin with receipt of the Holy Spirit, these persons born of spirit being analogous to the barley harvest of ancient Judean hillsides?

Why now would a Christian pastor claim the spirit was given on Pentecost, the High Sabbath of the Feast of Weeks, the High Sabbath symbolizing the conclusion of the harvest of firstfruits [the early barley harvest]? Is it because of how the pastor reads the Second Sophist novel titled Acts?

Backing up just a moment: Paul wrote, "What can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse" (Rom 1:19–20). And "it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual" (1 Cor 15:46).

Are sons of God, truly born of spirit, a "harvest" of the earth; of the creation? Jesus said of Himself: "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:23–24). So Jesus in John's Gospel used "a kernel of grain" as a type of Himself, having to die physically but live spiritually to bring forth many spiritual tillers, all initially growing from the same root but all tillers putting out their own roots so that "one" becomes many, each alike; each a fractal of the first stem that grew from the kernel planted at Calvary.

Returning now to when was the spirit given: Either the spirit was given on the day of the Wave Sheaf Offering [John's Gospel], the day when the first handful of new grain was "waved" before God and the harvest of new grain could begin, or the spirit was given on Pentecost (Feast of Weeks), when the harvest of firstfruits officially ended and two loaves of bread, baked with leaven and made from new grain beaten fine, were waved before God [Acts]. The spirit was given at the beginning of harvest season for firstfruits, again John's Gospel, or the spirit was given at the end of the harvest of firstfruits, the Greek novel, Acts.

One or the other will be believed as the day for when the spirit was given. Both cannot be believed; for the God of Acts is not the God of John's Gospel. The travel itinerary of Paul in Acts is not the travel itinerary of Paul in his epistles. Plus, Acts has the classical motifs of an episodic Second Sophist Greek novel, these motifs including a trial scene, imprisonment, and a shipwreck ... most Christians, even most Christian pastors have never knowingly read 1st or 2nd Century CE Greek fiction. Yet they read the Book of Acts as if it were good history when it is in reality bad historical fiction—

In Ken Kesey's novel, *Sometimes a Great Notion*, Joe Ben is pinned under a log as the tide rises, with the rising water eventually drowning Joe Ben ... having logged on the Oregon Coast, in Idaho's Bitterroots, in Alaska, I can say with absolute certainty that the log pinning Joe Ben would have been reduced to firewood long before the rising tide drowned Hank Stamper's brother. But Kesey's novel wasn't to be taken literally, but symbolically, with the drowning of Joe Ben to show that human endeavors cannot stop the forces of nature. Hank Stamper can swim upstream against the river current and hold even, but he can no more stop the tide from rising than King Canute could.

An intelligent person can read *Sometimes a Great Notion* and not be overly troubled by the liberalities Kesey takes with fact; an intelligent person can read Acts without being troubled by the liberalities this Greek novelists takes with fact—not really! Because of where the Book of Acts has been preserved, the misrepresentation of a novel as genuine history is troubling. It is the ignorant Christian who can read Acts without being troubled by its misrepresentations, not the intelligent Christian ...

The problem greater Christendom has faced and has been unable to solve is the loss of its youth: when a child of Christian parents is confronted with the “wisdom” and knowledge of this world, half or more of these Christian youth abandon the theology of parents, and unfortunately, begin worshipping Gaia, the earth goddess ... these youth become environmentalists, swallowing without chewing the poison of political watermelons that are “green” on the outside and “red” inside. Most of these youth do not believe in nothing, but rather, they elevate the earth to god/goddess status, or they become *merry pranksters* as Ken Kesey became.

In all of the Christian broadcasts I heard as I channel surfed, spending a few minutes here and a few minutes there before moving on in disgust, I didn't hear a single broadcaster challenge Scripture, pitting Scripture against Scripture, asking question such as why Jesus is mocked in a scarlet [red] robe in Matthew's Gospel (Matt 27:28–29), but in a purple robe in Mark's and John's Gospels (Mark 15:17; John 19:2) ... the reason for the mocking (Jesus being an alleged pretender to the throne) should have caused the soldiers to put a purple (the color of royalty) robe on Him, not a scarlet robe, the color red shifting emphasis away from the claim of being royalty and to the sacrifice itself.

The author of Matthew's Gospel in places copied directly from Mark's Gospel; therefore, for the author of Matthew's Gospel to change the color of the garment in which Roman soldiers mocked Jesus from purple to red signifies either a sloppy copyist [not the case] or a different mocking of a different Jesus being described ... there should be no pre-ministry history of Jesus recorded. There isn't any in Mark's Gospel. And in John's Gospel, the prehistory is that of the Beloved as the Creator of all things physical being with the God and having equality (Phil 2:5–11) with the God, the Father, before entering His creation. This leaves only Matthew's Gospel and Luke's Gospel with a physical prehistory. And Matthew's prehistory cannot be supported either from Scripture (the number of

generations, three sets of fourteen) or from secular sources (Herod ordering the murder of infant males at Bethlehem). Hence, early Sabbatarian Christians [Ebonite Christians] adopted as their holy text a document that was essentially Matthew's Gospel without chapters one and two.

Luke's Gospel, by its own claim (Luke 1:1-4), is apparently a reaction to the oral Gospel and early written texts, including Mark's Gospel. It was also apparently written by the Greek novelist that wrote Acts, which calls into question its veracity.

Matthew's Gospel is interesting; for its "difference" from Mark's Gospel suggests that it isn't about the physical man Jesus, but about the indwelling glorified Jesus that dwells in every person truly born of spirit. Thus, the mocking of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel need not focus on the physical reason for Jesus' crucifixion, but is free to focus on the spiritual reason: Jesus paying the death penalty for the sins of Israel committed in this world, and bearing the sins of Israel committed in the heavenly realm (where lust equates to adultery — Matt 5:27-28). For what did Paul say: "God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8) ... we were not sinners before we were conceived. Thus, Paul's Gospel; Matthew's Gospel plays "games" with time, moving what occurs in the physical world into the timeless heavenly realm, where "today" remains *today* regardless of how many years pass inside the creation. Thus, in the heavenly realm, Jesus is crucified for the sinner whenever the person is drawn from this world by God the Father. And yes, this means that Jesus' crucifixion from a heavenly perspective occurs *today*.

Ptolemaic astronomy (the geocentric model of astronomy) was a teaching that lasted into the 16th-Century. It was seemingly supported by both Scripture and astronomic observation, but it was wrong. It was always wrong, even when it was accepted as "true." And this is likewise the case for the dogma of greater Christendom.

Again, there's a war being fought within the Adversary's administration of this world, a war between demonic kings, all of whom rebelled against the Most High God ... the Christian broadcasters that polluted radio FM broadcasts for hundreds of miles all, without exception, lacked the courage needed to confront the Bible as a text: they were theologically as water flowing downhill, seeking the path of least resistance, temporarily slowed by a Commandment, but slipping out from under the Commandment as they meandered away from God.

This concept will be continued.

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