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Twenty-first century feudalism

Last Sunday Christianity marked the historic festival of Pentecost. While long disconnected from the Jewish rendition of the same, Pentecost Sunday is recognized as the birthday of the church. Churches with worship roots in a formal liturgy, focus upon three Biblical readings each Sunday, one from the Old Testament, one New Testament, and a Gospel reading. In Protestant circles these readings date at least from the Reformation, but probably the reading's roots go much further back, perhaps to even before the schism between Rome and the Orthodox. These Pentecost Sunday readings shared in many denominations are: Old Ezekiel 37:1-14; New Acts 2:1-21; Gospel John 15:26,27; 16:4b-15. For those seeking a more contemporary addition, the song, "Rushing Wind," by Steve Green, is found on iTunes sung by Steve and other artists.

If you read these passages, within the construct of what

is happening currently in the world's financial turmoil, they seem totally in sync with how our reliance upon our own knowledge and wisdom, from all the best and finest, is dismally inadequate in its comprehension of present reality.

We have written specifically about the Ezekiel passage in "Dry Bones Valley" in November 2007 PDF link , as well as mentioned it briefly in other articles. In that article we built upon how the passage refers to the restoration of national Israel which took place in the mid twentieth century, and it also should apply to the restoration of the church, which currently finds its glory not in God, but in the affairs and riches of the world, not much different than the nation of Israel in Ezekiel's day. If you combine the two restoration principles you find them, discussed amazingly in Romans 11, where in order for we "wild olives" to be grafted in, the olive tree must first be restored.

Just as we can look back in



the Bible and see applications and the reality of today, in similar fashion we can see parallels in common grace or the society as a whole. Conservative pundits have been calling President Obama a socialist from the time he became a candidate up to the present. From pretty much is inauguration the term fascism, as been added to describe his developing regime. On some occasions even the word communist has been used. An interesting article in the English version of Pravda used the term Marxism to describe the whole current American scheme. "American capitalism gone with a whimper" is well worth the read.

From the liberal side of the political spectrum and much of the general population however still give the President high or glowing marks for his ability to "not let this crisis go to waste" as "you ain't seen nothing yet," to use the President's own words.

What seems to be missing in all of this however is really a touch with the complex reality of the whole situation, and tying it into history, a history in which President Obama is just the current player in a line, much like the Pravda article describes. To say that Obama is trying to install "European style socialism" in the United States, grossly simplifies European culture, as well as it dumbs down the natural diversity of the American landscape as well as the true diversity of the American people.

The same can be said of all the other conservative and liberal descriptions. Furthermore while this current meltdown began in the United States, it has become a pandemic much more severe than the swine flu, because the infrastructure of all the world global financial markets are infected. The global prosperity faux pas is based upon cheap money and cheap credit, essentially borrowing from tomorrow to spend it today.

For some weeks I have been going back to the 1970s to begin the discussion of where this all began to go dreadfully wrong. The truth is however you can go back and start just about anywhere from the founding of the American Republic, to even the Genesis Garden in Eden.

What all these descriptions do is focus on the macro, rather than the micro, the culture, rather than the people. There was one book however, that is appropriate today as it was when it was written after WWII. That book is "The Road to Serfdom" by F. A. Hayek, which describes really the rise of what we would now spin as European style socialism.

If we have been on the road for sixty years, perhaps we have now arrived. We are now serfs in a world in which the common people don't really amount to much, as long as they pay their rent and homage to the Lords, the system works fine, except that the people are not really free. In other words the present worldly system is not "global free trade" but rather global feudalism.

Let us look at the dictionary definition of feudalism:

The dominant social system in medieval Europe, in which the nobility held lands from the Crown in exchange for military service, and vassals were in turn tenants of the nobles, while the peasants villeins or serfs were obliged to live on their lord's land and give him homage, labor, and a share of the produce, notionally in exchange for military protection.

For a more and comprehensive descriptive discussion see Feudalism.

So if you bothered to work through some of the examples and the history of feudalism in the link, you will see that it really is an evolving term, pretty much in the broad context as applicable today as it was in the ninth through the fourteenth centuries. Are you looked at as a serf or a consumer unit? Is there really any difference?

Let us put feudalism in a little more historic context. Following in succession from the fourteenth sixteenth centuries you have the Renaissance, which coincided with the Reformation that took up much of the sixteenth. Following in the seventeenth and eighteenth began the Enlightenment. The Industrial age began in earnest in the nineteenth and carried us through the twentieth.

Those who do not learn from history are bound to repeat it.

So in a simplistic rendition in western culture over about the last thousand years we see the

following. In the beginning individual people had little or no value. They were taken care of by an elite, which controlled all the natural wealth and the means by which it was maintained.

The Renaissance began slowly as people discovered that people really had a brain that worked quite well when challenged. Most of this related in some aspect due to the understanding that there was a God and that he had a plan by which individual people could be set free from individual bondage to a ruling elite. Whether that elite be kings, or lords, or popes, really didn't matter. The Reformation and ensuing wars, both natural and cultural, changed the face of Europe at that time and the effects are still present today.

Once man was freed as an individual and formal education became more widespread beyond the priesthood, mankind came up with all kinds of innovative ideas, some of them were intellectual, and again some were quite practical. Slowly this enlightenment began to believe that man did not need God but was completely free to develop in his own way. The founding of the United States rested upon that tension between man and God. The United States Constitution basically codified human freedom to develop everything as long as we realized that there were absolute values that kept common moral values.

In the Industrial age began an increasing reliance on stuff to make life much more pleasant. As things got easier, it was easier to think that we made this prosperity solely by our own intellect. As we evolved we lost sight of the fact that civilization is maintained by absolute values and more importantly unbridled or uncontrolled freedom brings anarchy, chaos, and social disruption.

Now in the twenty first century for the first time in a thousand years we are experimenting on the brink of a new medieval, dark ages, feudal culture. As long as the future is spun in only human centered "change we can believe in," the serfdom road is sure. Along that road socialism, utopianism, Marxism, and fascism are only variations on a theme. That theme is that people are no different than other animals; as such they

can be trained and bred just like any other animal. We know that is true because evolution is true, and we have known that truth, not for a thousand years but "scientifically" for about a hundred and fifty years, and culturally for about fifty. It must then logically follow that material stuff and philosophical materialism are truly civil unions, for after all marriage is really just an archaic religious term.

Try to get your mind around the fact that even though you may passively find the thought of being a serf degrading, that is what the Lords, Vassals, and Knights of the elite classes of enterprise and politics consider you to be. "To be or not to be, that is the question?" This question of course not only applies to citizens of the United States but to every other country around the world.

"Life is a stage and each must play their part." Is that true to your own script, or the script to those who tell you to pay sic your part, those who pay your salary, and at least for the time being in the United States, your health care?

Bringing this back around to the birth of the church at Pentecost. Those early Christians were dry bones, brought back to life by the Spirit of God. Those living humans changed the known Roman world in less than a century. That Spirit does two things of importance for this article. First of all it divinely grants you infinite worth as a human individual past, present, and future.

With that unique understanding of your own worth, for the first time you can unselfishly see the worth of others. That includes not just other Christians, but other others. But the catch is, as goes the song, "The only way to keep it is to give it away."

I suppose there are a lot of people that find, or hope to find security at Destination Serfdom. However, I would submit that you never really realized that you either are now a serf, or are a "serf in training." For the most part that training is tied to indoctrination of divinity of material stuff and philosophical materialism. Put bluntly you must be a consumer of stuff, for life has no other purpose.

The turbulent times we are now undergoing, will give you the perspective to analyze that process with a new, somewhat absolute perspective, you probably did not know you possessed. The Destination

Serfdom can be demolished while it is still under construction. Going back in history it is probably best described as a renaissance reformation.

You have a choice to play the role for which you were created, or to continue to be a serf. It is pretty much that black and white, for that is the unfolding times in which we live.

Make your choice and follow and grasp that destiny or the lack of destiny that serfs must carry alone.