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Why Me? *Priggish Blathering Compost*

We have reached the point in this expose´ of the self where history is about to catch up with the present. In that illumination we will soon be able to understand the context that makes us right, meaning correct, and everyone else is not so smart. We base our enlightened understanding on our evolving change we can believe in, never venturing outside our comfort zone, because that is our right, essentially because we are so very cool.

Last week we looked at how New England Calvinism pushed a number of new religious leaders out of the Calvinist box, and the changes they rent we still see among us today. Many Americans and people around the world, still find those rejected box outers to be our prophets and patron saints, even though we would never be so outwardly religious. Religion after all is really not something, we, the enlightened, need because it is so primitive

and dare we say, priggish. Thanks to our lucky stars we will never be that way.

We work very hard for our money, even though it never really increases our wealth, and we never have the time to really question who we really are, or where we are going. Again thanks to our lucky stars, for if we had the time to reflect, we might not like the reflection.

However if you look at that out of the box history from two hundred years ago, today really isn't that different. Just like back then all of life was and is about the present material. You go to church and for the most part they teach you how to be healthy, wealthy, and wise. They seem to talk about God, but no one seems to know God.

You go to the outdoor store and they show you all the neat stuff you need to bring with you when you go to the wilderness, so you can make it just like home. While the wild is somewhat free,



the stuff you need to get you there and keep you comfortable surely isn't. So you need your full time vocation to support your part time advocacy.

Is this all there is? Those with the most toys are subservient to their idols' wishes no demands. So when you come right down to the nitty gritty, nuts and bolts, the problems we face today is that we are both natural and transcendent personalities in a totally common or natural world.

No wonder we all fear the unknown, because we are told by all it is unknowable, and the choices are either to go it alone, or let the government leaders protect us from life's uncertainty. But we still have worries about human capacity to save us from the transcendent future they claim to understand, but yet they then deny its reality. Remember this, you have been given the gift of life for such a time as this, embrace those opportunities, because the alternative really only exists as a poor contrast of the past, tensioned with a vain hope of a renaissance future.

Perhaps a brief American timeline is in order.

The American republic was founded at a time where the religious teachings of the Reformation and the human understanding of the Enlightenment were ideally tensioned. This occurred near the beginning of the industrial revolution, where manufactured goods began to surpass simple agricultural commodities as the true economic engine.

Industrialization was coupled with the open North American frontier so that the immigrants to the United States had the best opportunities for wealth creation of any people in history. Essentially at the beginning of the twentieth century the frontier closed and manufacturing began to mature. In other countries the maturity of manufacturing and limited natural resources led too and through two world wars.

At the end of WWII we saw the reality of the beginning of modern global capitalism, basically through the creation of the Bretton Woods monetary agreements. This did not really address the fundamental developing maturity

of industrial manufacturing, but it did prolong the manufacturing of goods as the fundamental basis for economic growth.

This all began to fall apart in the United States during the simultaneous efforts to create the Great Society and fight the Viet Nam war. When Richard Nixon closed the gold window in 1971, began the opportunity for the United States to live beyond its means to create new wealth. This transition was quite rocky through the Ford, Carter, and early Reagan administrations.

With the Reagan tax cuts, investments in Wall Street companies skyrocketed, while existing rules on mergers and acquisitions were essentially eliminated. Government programs however were not decreased to meet the tax revenue reductions and government and private debt soared.

Now things begin to get complicated economically. Because of the ability to sustain economic growth by basically buying it with leveraged debt, rather than creating it out of hard work and ingenuity, prosperity returned to the land, tax revenues increased, and President Reagan became the economic messiah of conservatives. What was missing in this celestial era however, is the Wall Street boom sucked up all the liquidity needed to create new wealth and America's historic entrepreneurial efforts were curtailed to within the box concepts.

Things were quickly running out of gas until personal computers and their related adventures began an economic resurgence. We had entered the future and the future was the Information Age. No longer would human prosperity be shackled by the limits of making real stuff, now we could make very sophisticated intelligent stuff, sell it for a lot of money, and distribute it around the world, on floppy disks, then CDs and DVDs, and now you can just download it off your high speed Internet connection. The manufacturing of real stuff could be done anywhere in the world where labor was cheap, really cheap.

The problem with all of this was entry costs were quite low, if non existent, so that everyone could do it, and with no other means to create wealth no one makes any real money, and the Information Age became the dot.com bust, and still no one makes money with information. Furthermore

our historic information sources cannot support their necessary overhead.

When a culture that runs on cheap consumer goods, no domestic manufacturing, no wealth producing entrepreneurs, and the only jobs that have a future are government related, is that it can only be sustained by debt. The problem with debt is historically it needs to be based on something and it needs to be personal. So why not give everyone the opportunity to by a piece of the American Dream, a house of your own.

All this debt soon makes the historic function of money, not just in the United States, but around the world meaningless. For one example, with enough money oil can trade from 70 80+ per barrel because the Saudis and the market makers on Wall Street think that this is a fair price. It just so happens that that 80 price is just about where oil alternatives become economically feasible, but real profits would only come at say 100. Since no one really knows what a true free market oil price is, the graft and corruption continues. This trickles down to everyone, everywhere and this is just one economic necessity.

That price fixing could be done with a lot of stuff we really need, but the real hole in the bottom of the boat is that with 70 of the economy based upon consumer spending and no access to real historic money available to anyone, the United States can no longer finance its own prosperity, and the rest of the world is just flat out of luck. If you remove the USA contribution to globalism, other countries are in worse shape than the Americans.

This should show us three things. First of all wishful thinking, warm fuzzies, and or government spending is not going to fix the fundamental weaknesses of world economics. Secondly the problem will not be fixed until we find retool culture to something more sustainable than debt driven gross materialism. Third before we can find the path forward, we need to get out of the box and fundamentally examine why humans are different from the critters, and what about life really matters, even in a material world.

In other words the most salient problem we need to address is essentially religious, even if that is not a currently politically correct term. Last week with the out of box Calvinists we saw a number of groups the tried to address natural and Godly transcendence outside traditional New England Protestant ethics.

The basics of Calvinism, if you make the TULIP a cut flower, rests upon three theological concepts that begin with the letter G. Those three concepts are: guilt grace gratitude. This essentially flows through the transition in Calvinist terms from regeneration by grace to salvation. Simply God's law makes us understand we are guilty sinners before God's holiness, then through the grace offered through Jesus Christ alone we become children of God, and because of that wonderful free gift of salvation we are to be naturally and spiritually eternally grateful and live our lives accordingly.

While I do not find anything substantially wrong with the Calvinist perspective, I think it is somewhat dated, simplistic and does miss a fundamental concept of Protestant theology, hence I like better the concept that you should wear your CAP, which stands for the acrostic: condemnation adoption praise. I like my CAP better because, personally I think it is better. Condemnation is similar to guilt, but it is worse, because it contains not only a personal aspect, it also contains a transcendent external judgmental component. Then through Jesus Christ alone, not only am I saved by grace alone and become a child of God, I am legally adopted according to the scriptures. That is really good news and leads to praise or something deeper than just being grateful.

Now I have probably gotten more heat for the adoption concept than any other theological concept I teach. First of all the straight forward reading of scripture clearly state that legal adoption, and it also makes it eternally enforced. Which gets to the heart of the objection, which generally comes in the form of "If I am adopted, what do I need to do?" To which my reply it isn't what you need to do that is important, it is what you get to do, now that you can truly focus upon the freedom of your adopted reality.

In theological terms this keeps the indicatives and the imperatives in their proper Godly positions.

Furthermore it does not mean, as in the Calvinist TULIP that I cannot choose to walk away from that adoption, when understanding the true nature of God's legal gift, walking away would be just the most stupid thing I could ever do.

Of these three word progressions I would classify the typical fundamentalist evangelical response more akin to the concepts of sin repentance joy. This really is just a more appropriate understanding of either the 3 Gs or wearing your CAP, describing essentially the more common American revivalist method of conversion. In this aspect the preacher uses God's and his persuasive skill to convict you as a sinner before a holy God. The bridge back to your created relationship with God, rests upon your repentance. Once you repent and come to Jesus your sins are forgiven and you are filled with joy.

The most common Christian and other true religious progression however is more along the lines of three Rs: revelation redemption response. This shows well that redemption is not just a human attribute but involves the hand of the Almighty, very similar to the Old Testament covenant of the Law given at Sinai, rather than the Abrahamic covenant of grace. I would say that this concept is more self centered especially in the fact that your response is really not a function of worship, as in our previous examples, but rather your direct responsibility to create and maintain good works, as a perquisite to receiving your reward in heaven. In our antithesis to Calvinism last week I would put Christian Science and Mormonism into this progression, as well as Judaism, Roman Catholicism, some postmodern evangelical churches, and cults.

All of these progressions are just a method to understand the grace of God in human terms, and is therefore limited by fallen human attributes. We can never truly begin to understand the infinite attributes of God, though we were chosen to attempt to make them real in our world and time. Our progressions leave out passive deists, theists, pagans, Islam and other religions including eastern religions that may adopt some or all of these progressions for humans to find their place in the cosmos in which humanity transcendently shows its likeness of God's image.

Finally, we come to the final religious progression that rejects anything other than the material world. This is the dominate religious paradigm responsible for the mess the world is now going through. That progression is: rejection enlightenment destruction. These people reject that there is a God or anything at all supernatural or transcendent. They believe that they gain their insights through their conscious enlightenment and hence attempt to redefine science, as a box of their understanding alone, and eventually will learn through their destruction that they were eternally wrong.

The reason however that this atheistic materialism has become the supreme religion of the land is that those with supernatural religious constructs bought into the evolving material package, and then decided to make it part of their plan to construct God's eternity here on the present earth. This priggish making of their image as the only human image, then morphed with materialism to become the Progressivism that now has failed to bring God and heaven or utopia down to earth.

Here we find our world today, a big blue globe suspended in space, with nothing of transcendent substance simply a pile of blathering priggish compost.