



# *The* Wonder Springs Chronicle

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## The Wonder Springs Chronicle

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## No Skin In The Game V

So if...? What...?

Before we go there, we made some significant changes at the beginning of the year at Wonder Springs. The decision was made to drop most, if not all, the commentating about the current state of affairs, and instead focus upon where we are heading, or might be heading. In the months and years ahead, putting this into a historical context, we, the United States of America, didn't get in this precarious condition, because of Barack Obama, or George W. Bush, or any single president or congress for that matter.

To try to keep this discussion within the frame of reference that can be handled in weekly installments, rather than some bookish tomb, we use the 1960s as the date a national choice was made to begin this progressive slide to Gomorrah. Sodom carries too much religious baggage for the time in which the Baby Boomers began to come of age, but the linkage of both the Biblical cities is

appropriate.

That decade began with the transfer of the presidency from Dwight D. Eisenhower, who I only remember for playing golf and bowling, other than that I think he was totally boring, to the Camelot of John F. Kennedy and Jackie. We have provided a link to the totality of Eisenhower's final speech, mostly remembered for his warning about the then potential perils of the Military Industrial Complex, but the total context of those fifteen minutes seem to be as important today, as they were in January 1961.

A few years later I was in the wood shop, of Kettle Falls High School, taking a mechanical drawing class, when my dad, the high school principal, spoke over the intercom that President Kennedy, had been shot in Dallas. We then listened in disbelief, as the radio reports continued to be piped into every classroom.

Presently, progressing through early 2011, we did a number of



stand-alone articles attempting to find a focus for further development. That was followed by two parts of “God in the Details.” This week we will again use that Godly context, to bring us to a chasm of choice, that will define the nation’s future, as well as the future development of the rest of the world.

We are now in part five of this series of “No Skin In The Game” where I have digressed, until now, to sort of give the reader, a brief historical context, as to the major highlights that affected my secular worldview, before we begin tackling the economic mountain before us. This week we focus, or digress further, depending upon your specific life paradigms, into the jungle of human religion. That wild-land, beyond the reach of human wisdom, enlightenment, or independent desires, we shall attempt to describe for the remainder of this episode.

So if there truly is a God, who created this world and everything in it, not all that long ago, like thousands of years, not millions and billions, what would that mean to our future as we attempt to find a wilderness pilgrimage path into a less dismal and sustainable reality of the future?

We should probably begin with the Ussher Chronology that gives much of the American religion, its belief system that the world has been around six thousand years. Shortly, The Rapture will happen, or Christ will come for his second coming, and God will issue in a thousand year millennial reign here on earth. That makes this current age last seven thousand years, which we assume is God’s perfect number. My response is that the good Bishop spent too much time in his Irish office and he knew little, or didn’t care, about the reality of a stupendous ice age, between the flood of Noah and our present historical continuum of time.

How long was that epoch? Only God knows for sure; if we could know—our world would surely be flooded with Ice Age Study Bibles, T-shirts and other religious kitsch, limited only by the creative idol making mind of individual resourcefulness. “Drown—Freeze your way to Hell” is surely a different spin on Fire and Brimstone.

Beginning in the 1960s we see a religious change in the United States from the tension between Protestant liberalism and fundamentalism,

with or without Pentecostal roots, and the rise of a redefinition of Evangelicalism with a capital E. This deep change began in southern California, powered with new religionless church music and a morphing of a type of Christian neoorthodoxy, minus the extremes of overly emotional holiness Pentecostalism piety, now defined as charismatic, fused with the elevation of the supremacy of the Word of God.

This form of church attempted to move beyond religion into a fusion of charismatic gifts with verse-by-verse exposition of the Bible. At the same time this living church kept the fundamentalist Dispensationalism of the imminent Rapture of Christians into heaven, before the Great Tribulation takes place here on earth, before concluding with the second coming of Christ before the thousand year millennial reign of Jesus, discussed nowhere else in the Bible except in Revelation Chapter 20.

The worldwide growth of this form of Christianity found its major advocate in the ministry of Calvary Chapel headquartered in Costa Mesa. Our linked Easter Sunday sermon from Ken Ortiz, pastor of Calvary Spokane, is a first-generation, saved former drug user of this hippie generation, who has built a large congregation within this church genre, in a former grocery store centered strip mall on the northern edge of Spokane.

Moving beyond Calvary Chapel, America’s megachurches are built primarily upon this Calvary model with an emphasis on a dynamic pastor-teacher-community leader, many now surpassing the largest Calvary’s in size. Calvary Chapel’s continually plant small church congregations as the major growth mechanism of the movement, while determined not to create a more historic denominational structure.

Just like Protestant Liberalism and more fundamentalist structures that preceded Evangelicalism, when churches move away from preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and standing for Christianity apart from human religion, we see a rapid decline of the American nation. In other words, Evangelicalism saved us from a pending earlier national fate, but only for a time, before it too became worldly and lost the dynamic power of the cross of Christ.

Going back to the question if there is a God, then what? We must realize that just as Old Testament Israel was founded by God, as keepers of his specific

revelation of himself, the Bible; then the United States, founded about 1700 years after the closing of the New Testament canon, is God's common grace revelation of himself through creation's natural laws that provide personal freedom and liberty. No nation in human history has ever existed which has essentially these Godly religionless Christian foundations.

Therefore if there is a God, and the United States of America was founded for his glory, to be an example, not proclaiming the wonder of a Christian religious nation, rather it is just a common secular nation founded on the transcendence of God himself.

To those who want to believe that God is a religious myth, that we evolved out of directionless chance, and now claim to be the superior human progressive Gnostics among us, they are going to encounter some problematic obstacles to maintain their current power structure.

In other words for the immediate future, we are in for some changes, which no one wants to believe in, simply because the changes are now beyond our current intellectual capacity. So to no good end, fabricating fanciful desires, becoming God in our own eyes, we ignore true reality. In bygone eras, dating from the Reformation we call such anathemas—Total Depravity. Today we elevate these personality traits, into noble virtues.

This reality is as old as the written narrative of the Bible itself. We see the covenant of God's specific grace instituted by the end of Genesis Chapter 3. By the end of Genesis chapter 11 we see the exegesis of God's serious holy nature through a global natural flood, the confusion of the languages and the Tower of Babel. All of this because a gracious God wanted people to experience the blessings of the whole created earth.

Skipping over thousands of years of very relevant history, we today have made cities the highest icon of human godless development. Yet as we whimsically introduced last week, the Wild Earth Society wants nothing to do with God's creation unless it is well regulated in formal wilderness, or other natural areas where we only spend enough time to say we like nature. We want to comprehend nature on our terms, but we fear that it may indeed apprehend us, if not something

much more seriously fatal.

My first grasping of this Wild Earth Society, fear of true nature paradigm, began early this century. I was seriously looking at buying a business near Glacier National Park in Northwest Montana. Before one of those Big Sky adventures, to save a little money, I decided to campout for one or more of those nights. To facilitate that car camping experience there was something I needed at the flagship store of REI in Seattle. After picking up the item, and to help pass the driving time I was listening to the audio version of David Brooks' "Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There." Bobos, in the Brooks' usage, stands for urban bourgeois bohemians, who are basically synonymous with my current Wild Earth Society members.

Following my time in the Kalispell area, I also ventured to check out a gold mine high in the Rockies just south of the Blackfoot River. The Blackfoot was the river in which the book and the movie, "A River Runs Through It" was based, but the actual filming was done on other Montana streams. I spent the night in the KOA campground in Missoula, because it seemed like the right thing to do.

The next morning I got in my Dakota, moved onto Interstate 90, and setting the cruise control for the maximum legal speed, I again joined Brooks' Bobos narration. Now comfortable for the drive to Spokane, David, I now felt enough at ease with his narration to call him David, began to describe some of the research for the book. On his western sojourn, David decided he wanted to really feel nature as portrayed in the running river movie, so made a stop in Missoula, rented a car and drove to the Blackfoot to get a real feel of the country, the river, and the spell of Mother Nature.

The story goes, David spent a long time there, sitting on a big rock watching the river run by him and the rock, patiently waiting for something to happen. It didn't, and he finally realized he had to cut short his vision quest, because he was meeting friends in Missoula for dinner at six. At the last possible minute to still make the dinner date, he cut short his nature odyssey, barely making his dinner appointment, without experiencing anything life changing except for an antecedent to his next nature adventure, and an afternoon watching a river run by him and the rock; that rock becoming nothing more than his vantage perch.

As I was leaving the drainage of the Clark Fork River to begin my climb to the Bitterroot crest at Lookout pass, David began his next adventure; at none other than the REI flagship store in Seattle. Recreational Equipment Inc., is a co-op that faithfully returns ten percent dividends on your every purchase and the selection of similar quality outdoor experience equipment, you never knew you needed, is unsurpassed in the world. David's descriptions of all the gear and their ties to the Blackfoot kept me happily amused all the way to Spokane.

It is our human nature, just like David, to go someplace natural and contact or experience nature. The problem with natural law and common grace is that our wishes are not created to be fulfilled by its magnificence. Rather the grandeur has a natural apprehension ability, to make us but insignificant clay in the presence of a common Almighty revelation.

Seattle has adopted the slogan of the "Emerald City" because of the rain induced greenness of the surrounding natural environment and is the nation's fifteenth largest Metropolitan Statistical Area, with a population of about 3.4 million. Spokane, in eastern Washington, has adopted a similar natural slogan, "Near Nature, Near Perfect," still being less than fifteen percent of Seattle's size.

No matter how natural you may think you are, massive urban centers are the most unsustainable living environments known to mankind. That ability of the city to truly take care of its own is probably the greatest lie or illusion fostered upon the inhabitants; and that deceptive fabrication is directly proportional to size.

This ability of urban areas to grow and prosper is directly the result of Industrial Age maturity and the abundance of cheap energy to import everything other than the direct indigenous manufacturing, distribution, financial and related services. In the twenty-first century Individual Age, those advantages shall become distinct liabilities.

The biggest problem does not stem from the material world however, it finds its essence in the belief, we see first discussed in Genesis 11—the Tower of Babel; updated into this century as human centered evolutionary progressive Gnosticism—the belief we have evolved beyond all that is earthly.

This spiritual enlightenment has two atheistic and mutually exclusive worldviews. The first, defined as Progressive Elitism, relying on collective social engineering and social justice, is more commonly known as socialism or communism. The second, defined as Laissez Faire Scoundrels, is really a form of corporate and governmental libertarianism. The individual being replaced by crony corporations, political lobbyists and politicians, desiring to do what they want under a guise of making money for the stockholders, or big stakeholders, in the process becoming much more powerful.

Bringing this back to where we began this week and our starting point for our next installment; if there is a God, who is actually the sovereign creator of the universe, and it is his desire to see his most common expression of humanity (the United States) on this side of eternity, restored to its rightful place, what happens to you and yours; both in the near term as the Industrial Age, maintaining an endgame of de-leveraging excessive debt, eventually gives way to an opportunity where individuals need to develop new decentralized methods of making a living, creating wealth, and being obedient to both the American paradigm of pursuing happiness, and the Godly imperative of being fruitful and multiplying.

Whew! What I have attempted to show in the paragraph just above, is that the immediate future will be complex times, trying times, difficult times, but you will come through those times one way or the other. On the other side you will be a different person, a person with skin in your own game.

You will know more about who you are, who you were created to be, so much so, you will find that potential future truly impossible to grasp. Then you will know that you are not a happenstance of chance, but a truly unique eternal human personality; somehow fused with flesh and bones, the dust of the earth. You will recover a sense of Wonder and all you will be able to communicate is "Whew! Amen!"