

January 13, 2016

## Common Greetings— *Will the Center Hold?*

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Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.

*The Second Coming.* (William Butler  
Yeats, 1919)

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### 1.

Cultures function as circles radiating around a center: economic, geographical, ideological, or even theological, the center defines the culture. It is at the center where tradition prevents radical change, or even significant innovation. It is the center that establishes both the rules for conduct in the culture as well most vigorously enforces these rules. It is on the margins of a culture where change occurs. Thus, British culture radiates around London, not the Lakes District which has its own secondary culture. Irish culture radiates around Dublin and the Catholic Church. American culture has for the past century two centers and is thus elliptical, one center being New York City, the other Los Angeles, the ellipse distorted by the shape of the North American continent. And where cultural circles overlap—and they often overlap—small spaces bound by double arcs are created. It is in such a space where the uniquely feminine experience exists. It is in a crescent of wilderness that cannot be explored by the patriarchal culture where a secondary culture has come into existence; for men father babies, but do not carry them inside themselves nor give birth to them. And a patriarchal deity fathers sons of God, but cannot of Himself bring these sons of God to their spiritual birth.

Where non-concentric cultures radiate around a common center as in a feminine and a patriarchal culture sharing belief that Christ Jesus is the firstborn Son of God, the feminine experience is hampered by the pseudonymous epistle First Timothy, in which auditors find the following:

I [this is not Paul even though that claim is made] desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is

proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and *Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor*. Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control. (1 Tim 2:8–15 emphasis added)

Endtime disciples can know that the Apostle Paul did not write this epistle without having expert knowledge about mid and late 1<sup>st</sup>-Century Greek words and syntax, one way of showing that Paul was not the author of the Pastoral Epistles; for a major problem exists in what the author of this pseudonymous epistle writes. For Paul doesn't contradict himself—and Paul says by the hand of Tertius, Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man [Adam], and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. (Rom 5:12–14)

Sin entered the world through Adam's unbelief of God, not through Eve eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. Adam was the transgressor, not Eve; for the Lord told Eve nothing about forbidden fruit. Adam spoke to his wife about forbidden fruit, and Adam added to what the Lord had told him about the Tree of Knowledge; for the Lord said nothing to Adam about touching the tree.

Adam was a transgressor before any fruit was eaten; for Adam added to the words of the Lord, thereby disclosing his distrust of Eve and his qualified belief of God ... in adding to what the Lord told Adam about the Tree of Knowledge, Adam presumed to have authority he did not have; Adam presumed to speak for the Lord, thus uttering words that were not true, words that the Adversary used to expose Adam's unbelief, thereby bringing his unbelief to life [in the person of Eve] so that his sin could destroy him.

Regardless of whether the Temptation Account is historically true, the story exists—and because the story exists, the story has a life of its own apart from whether the story describes a historical phenomenon ... the Temptation Account functions as prophecy about Christ and the Christian Church, with the three sons Eve bares Adam representing Christians in the tribulation: Cain and Abel represent believing and unbelieving Christians in the Affliction, the first 1260 days of the seven endtime years. Seth represents the third part of humanity (from Zech 13:9) that only has to endure to the end to be saved.

Besides, Eve as Adam's wife was "covered" by Adam's belief of God; by Adam's obedience for Adam was a type of Christ (Rom 5:14), and as Christ Jesus' righteousness covers His disciples as a cloak or garment, Adam's righteousness would have covered Eve ... in analogy, Eve represents the Christian Church; Adam represents Christ Jesus. And as the sins (transgressions) of disciples are "covered" by grace (the euphemistic expression for the garment of Christ Jesus'

righteousness), Eve eating from the Tree of Knowledge would have been “covered” by Adam’s belief, his righteousness.

But when Adam saw Eve eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and not die, Adam ceased to believe the Lord, and Adam ate fruit that was specially forbidden to him. He no longer believed the Lord, and death metaphorically entered this world through his unbelief.

As an aside, there is an unrealized change in the nature of “death” that Paul addressed in passing: *death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam ...* death of a person whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam leaves the person just as dead as Adam, but without sin being counted against the person who was without the Law, without instruction from the Lord. Thus the death of a person without the Law—whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam—differs from the death of a person under the Law in that when entering into judgment, the person under the Law will be condemned for this person knew what was expected of him or her and didn’t do what was expected as Adam didn’t do what was expected of him. The person whose transgressions were not like Adam’s didn’t know what was expected of the person, and as such will be judged not by the worst the person did but by the best that the person did. Therefore, what Paul states in his gospel should make better sense:

There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality. For *all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law.* For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. For *when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.* (Rom 2:9–16 emphasis added)

The person who has sinned—all have—without the Law will perish, will die without the Law whereas those who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law. The person who sinned without the Law but who, when alive, did by nature [the person’s nature] what the Law required will live spiritually, thereby rendering this person’s death to be of a differing nature than the death of the person under the Law who will be judged by the Law ... yes, both are just as dead until resurrected, but the person under the Law has no excuse for the person’s transgression whereas the person not under the Law has an excuse. Whether the excuse will be accepted depends upon the totality of what the person did while alive, with the balance beam more heavily weighted by what was done later in life than earlier in life.

In writing the Pastoral Epistles, the person who claimed to be the Apostle Paul but was not sinned mightily against Christ Jesus in what he wrote about

women learning from their husbands, about women being saved by childbirth, about men desiring the office of deacon or bishop; for in each case, importance is placed on the flesh, on gender. And sons of God are without gender, but are as angels are.

Can the problem with the Pastoral Epistles supporting a patriarchal culture be seen? Western patriarchal culture evolved from early Christendom, but not from Christ Jesus, allegedly the center of Christianity but a center that didn't hold. For with Christ, there is neither male nor female (Gal 3:28). There are only sons of God, sons without gender, sons that are like angels (Matt 22:30). Thus, the sexism inherent to greater Christendom comes not from Christ Jesus but from the two legs of the early Christian Church: Hellenistic paganism, and Pharisaical Judaism, both of which were patriarchal.

The first, Hellenistic paganism, was patriarchal as a means to suppress the fiercely independent nature of Greeks who would and did journey to the ends of the earth and if possible even into the underworld where shades sought the blood Odysseus brought. Men ruled by the bow, spear, and dagger. Women deceived men; thus women had to be controlled or wars would be fought because of their deceptions. And this is what's seen in 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy: Eve was deceived and became the transgressor, a story any Greek male would embrace. It was what Greek men wanted to believe.

Men within Pharisaical Judaism had Moses and the Law to support their superiority over women, who in the Tenth Commandment are compared to houses: "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. And you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's" (Deut 5:21).

Actually, Pharisees anticipated what would be revealed after the spirit was given: in marriage, a husband penetrates his wife for the purpose of procreation and is thereby one with her as the spirit of Christ [*pneuma Christou*] penetrates the spirit of the person [*to pneuma tou 'anthropou*] and the two spirits become one spirit, a new creature that is a son of God. Therefore, Christ is the Head of the disciple as the husband is the head of his wife and as God is the Head of Christ (1 Cor 11:3); for the spirit of God [*pneuma Theou*] in the bodily form of a dove descended upon and entered into [*eis*] the man Jesus—into His spirit—when John raised Jesus from a watery grave in the River Jordan (Mark 1:10). So the spirit of God in the spirit of Christ in the spirit of the disciple has God being the Head of Christ and Christ being the Head of the disciple, which isn't a fleshly body, but the new creature raised from death inside the soul of the person, with this new creature being the head of the soul, the soul being the head of the fleshly body if it were not for the continued indwelling of Sin and Death in the fleshly members of disciples.

The relationship of a man to his wife will now be analogous to the relationship of the soul to the fleshly body, with the spirit [*pneuma*] and the soul [*psuche*] forming the inner self of a physical person, and with the soul [again, *psuche*] and the flesh [*soma*] together forming the person.

When a person is only once-born, it takes two people to form the shadow and copy of the twice-born person who has a living inner self as well as a physically living outer self.

Now, moving all of this back to what Paul wrote about not understanding why his inner self could not rule over his outer self, we again hear Paul's words translated into English:

For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now *it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me*. For I know that *nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh*. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now *if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me*. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For ***I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.*** (Rom 7:14–23 emphasis and double emphasis added)

The giving of the Law brought Sin to life in ancient Israel so that Sin might devour unbelieving Israelites ... all who rebelled against the Lord in Egypt (Ezek 20:5–8) were worthy of death in Egypt, but the Lord did not bring early death upon these rebelling Israelites for their sins were covered by Pharaoh having enslaved Israel, with Pharaoh taking upon himself the sins of Israel in Egypt.

Israel then again rebelled against the Lord at Sinai in the gold calf incident and all of Israel, except for Joshua and Moses, were worthy of death, but the Lord again did not bring early death upon Israel for there was at the time no replacement nation for Israel. However, the Lord in prohibiting Israel from kindling fires on the Sabbath (Ex 35:3) qualitatively changed the nature of Israel's death so that Israel could never have spiritual life, only physical life. The circumcised nation of Israel disqualified itself from being twice-born.

Then in the wilderness of Paran, Israel again rebelled against the Lord and went so far in their rebellion as to ready themselves to stone Moses and Arron, Joshua and Caleb (Num 14:10). This time, the Lord had had enough of Israel's unbelief, saying,

How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them? I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you [Moses] a nation greater and mightier than they. (Num 14:11)

Moses pleaded for the lives of those who moments before intended to stone him, but the Lord wasn't letting Israel off: the men of Israel, except for Joshua and Caleb in whom was a different spirit, would perish in the wilderness. They would not enter the Promised Land—and it was men who, as types of the souls [*psuchas*] of Christians, could not enter the Promised Land, a representation of the Sabbath, the Millennium, and of heaven itself. Nothing was said about women who were not numbered in the census of the second year.

There is a difference between the fleshly bodies of men and of women, a difference that signifies the difference between the soul—Paul’s soul that wanted to keep the Law—and the fleshly body in which sin dwells and which will never enter heaven because flesh is physical and has mass.

The fleshly body has gender because the body is flesh and blood; the inner self does not have gender because it is not flesh and blood.

The Law brought Sin to life in the fleshly bodies of Israel so that Sin might devour unbelieving Israelites. The giving of the spirit following the Second Passover will bring Sin to life in the souls of Christians so that Sin might destroy the souls of unbelieving Christians.

In any patriarchal culture, the gender of fleshly bodies is important. In any matriarchal culture, the gender of fleshly bodies has importance. But any person who places importance on gender, on the flesh cannot please God.

Paul wrote by the hand of Tertius,

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the spirit set their minds on the things of the spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (Rom 8:5–8)

Those who live according to the flesh place importance on gender, on race, on the trappings of culture—and those who live according to the flesh cannot keep the Law even when they outwardly transgress no Commandment; for the Law brings Sin to life inside the Law-keeper so as to destroy the flesh.

In Christ, there is no male nor female: the flesh has no importance. Fleshly bodies are merely houses that can be coveted by unbelievers; hence the Tenth Commandment equating wives to houses, both of which were, in ancient Israel, the property of the husband as a person’s fleshly body is the property of the inner self dwelling in the fleshly body.

In Paul’s first epistle to the holy ones at Corinth is an example of the transformation of a ministry of the Law into a ministry of the spirit:

Moses wrote,

If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. *If a man lies with his father's wife, he has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.* (Lev 20:10–11 emphasis added)

But Paul wrote,

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to

deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. (1 Cor 5:1–5)

Stoning killed the fleshly body of the unbelieving person [the person's unbelief manifested as transgression of the Law], but under the ministry of the spirit, a man lying with his father's wife was still a sin but by delivering the sinner to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, the hand of the son of God wasn't on the neck of the sinner. The person was returned to Satan so that the possibility of the person's spirit being saved in the person's judgment remained.

Under the Law, sinners came into judgment and condemnation at death, their death was to come when their transgression became known. But under the spirit, sinners are covered by Christ Jesus' righteousness so that they might live as the men of Israel lived in the wilderness even after having rebelled against the Lord.

Note, Caleb would have been among those Israelites that engaged in an orgy when the gold calf was cast by Aaron. Not so for Joshua. But when the spies returned from their scouting trip into the Promised Land, Caleb was a believer. Apparently he had changed; had embraced a different spirit; now had a different spirit in him. And so it will be for some Christians coming from greater Christendom in the Affliction, again the first 1260 days of the seven endtime years of tribulation.

Those Christians who continue to place importance in the flesh, in gender and race, will find that their center doesn't hold once the Second Passover liberation of a second Israel occurs.

I wrote decades ago (from Book 3 of "Library" found in *Upriver, Beyond the Bend*),

But my heart's tempered tool steel,  
no, it's casehardened like the lock  
parts I used to file from mild plate  
fished from dumpsters, made usable  
by quenching in soft lye,  
mottled purple & browns  
skin deep, burned bruises; lock parts  
whose freeplay has limits not checked  
with a mike but seen with the eye,  
parts lapped till they function  
as silk on silk. I'm that gun,  
a replica of my own construction,  
seven lands, seven grooves, gouged  
by a single hook, shimmed with paper.  
My center holds a patched ball:  
To look down the hole requires faith  
no one will pull the trigger.

To examine a culture to see if its center holds is analogous to looking down the barrel of a loaded rifle. If the center holds, nothing much happens; nothing much can be seen. But if the trigger is pulled, death is assured ... a long time ago, the Christian Church died spiritually when Christians set themselves up as pastors and teachers, judges of what is or isn't canonical Scripture. These judges

pulled the trigger that spiritually killed not only themselves but now, a great many women in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries CE.

Where cultures overlap, crescents of wilderness are created at the outer edges of two or more cultures, such as plural Islamic cultures and plural Christian cultures ... Muslims in America are really free to move past the fundamentalism of Shia and Sunni cultures in the Middle East, but they are not free to adopt the cultures of the flesh that presently hold dominance in the United States. Muslim women do well to wear a head covering; married Christian women would do well to wear a head covering for the sake of angels. But it is the wearers of head coverings that have the authority to wear or not to wear. No person has the authority to compel a woman to wear a head covering: she has to come to that decision on her own for her decision reflects upon her relationship with God and her understanding of deity.

The margins of cultures permit innovation in art and design, even in ideology, especially when cultural centers are weakened by distance and unbelief and do not hold to their edges.

When the book and show catalogue, *Crossroads of the Continent: Cultures of Siberia and Alaska* [authors William W. Fitzhugh and Aron Crowell], was first released in 1988, I was a mid-life graduate student at University of Alaska Fairbanks, having returned to the university after being away for 23 years so that my daughters could live at home rather than in a dorm.

That fall semester of 1988, my middle daughter, Kristel, took an art course from Harry Calkins, a student of Bill Holm, one of two men responsible for the recovery of Northwest Coast Formline Art. Evidently my daughter had mentioned me enough times that Harry Calkins knew me by name; so when during the cold snap in January and February 1989 (when Fairbanks' daytime high temperatures didn't reach minus fifty for five weeks) I cut through the seemingly empty Native Arts Studio to go from the Fine Arts Building to the Bookstore, a distance of a few dozen yards but far enough the cold penetrated light jackets and heavy shirts worn inside the Fine Arts Building. The afternoon temperature was negative 67 degrees without wind chill.

Harry Calkins was working alone in the Native Arts Studio—and he called to me by name ... I hadn't intended to enter the studio if anyone was in the studio even though its back door was thirty or forty feet closer to the backdoor of the Bookstore than the door at the end of the Fine Arts hallway. But being addressed by name, I stopped and we talked about Northwest Coast Art and Tlingit narrative traditions. I told Harry that I couldn't "read" Formline motifs, and he suggested that I take *Intro to Native Art* as a 200-level anthropology course. As a Teaching Assistant, adding a course didn't cost anything; so I agreed that Fall Semester 1989, I would take the course, and I did. I then took Native Art as a 400-level Art course Spring Semester 1990, and as a 600-level Art course Fall Semester 1990. I was by this time selling my Formline carvings.

Spring 1990, Bill Holm came to Fairbanks for a show and to discuss the traveling *Crossroads of the Continent* exhibit—and during discussions with Bill Holm and Harry Calkins about Aleut art, Bill referred me to an article in the show catalogue about rules and conventions breaking down in cultural margins.



The American literary critic and writer on cultural and social issues Elaine Showalter would have the feminist experience occurring in a crescent of wilderness created from the overlap of nonconcentric circles representing patriarchal culture and subjection of feminine experience to the patriarchy: there is an overlap in which women are women, with childbirth in particular being an experience outside the dominant cultural patriarchy. And what Bill Holm said about the overlap between Aleut and Tlingit cultures seems to be what Showalter explains concerning feminism: there is a small area when the dominance of a culture loses its authority and thereby permits the birth of new conventions, new traditions that survive for a while.

The center of Western patriarchal culture has been the Christian Church, but again, as a cultural center Christianity doesn't hold. Christianity as traditionally taught will not withstand deconstruction, nor even close reading of its sacred texts. For how many women went to the tomb on the morrow after the Sabbath, one [John's Gospel], two [Matthew's Gospel]; three [Mark's Gospel]; or many [Luke's Gospel]? And the answer is undeterminable from the Bible.

The Book of Acts is the only ancient Greek novel that most Christians will ever read: Acts is a Second Sophist novel with all of the traditional motifs of Sophist's novels except for its ending, which seems to have been torn off and discarded by someone in the early Church having recognized Acts for what it is, historical fiction ... the ending should have had heroine and hero getting together, or in the case of Acts, Paul functioning as the heroine being sacrificed in Rome, then visibly resurrected from death and meeting Christ in the clouds. And if such an ending would have been allowed to stand, Christianity as an ideology would have been over.

With the writing of Acts, Christianity as an ideology had been brought to an end, its democratic center having been devoured by the patriarchal cultures of the region ... the Adversary had effectively killed the Jesus Movement, but not before critical mass was achieved; that is, enough converts to keep the Movement visibly alive even after the Father ceased to draw additional disciples from this world and the Movement was spiritually dead.

Any Christian who places importance on the flesh is still a son of disobedience looking down the barrel of Christ.

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