

Paleo-anthropology continues to astonish us with its revelations of what in this Thinksheet I'll call PEOPLE-FLOW, the ancient movements of humanity in general and of peoples in particular across land and sea. Carl Sagan, the atheist-romantic astronomer, preaches that our species won't limit its peregrinations to this planet--a noun from the Latin for "foreign," producing also "pilgrim." Nobody here but just us peregrinators, pilgrims, foreigners wherever we are, as paleo-anthro. teaches that the idea of "natives" is ignorant: "aborigines" almost certainly aren't, ie almost certainly originated somewhere else....Now, the politics of people-flow hasn't caught up with this scientific development. Let's do a bit of mucking about with the implications:

1. For me as a Christian, "the lands of the Bible" are the most interesting and important real estate for studying people-flow and the politics thereof. Before agriculture, land was occupied but not possessed. With land-possession claims came (so say the paleo-historians) georhetoric & war: the sacred and the soil, though distinguishable, became inseparable, as unto this day. Land may have been / may be acquired by military invasion, by gradual infiltration + squatting or purchase or both, by coup either of an elite or of the masses, by imperial breakup & abandonment, or even by UN grant--but however acquired, land has been / is held by "war" (ie by military defense, actual/potential) and/or by "internal security" (ie by actual/potential police action against internal threats to the public tranquility). Till Kingdom (Realm?) come, I see no reason to suppose humankind can rid itself of the war/police system, though I sympathize with some forms of witness to "a better way" (eg, the coast-to-coast antinuke peace march ending in Wash. DC today, Mohammad's birthday--a coincidence, I'm sure--15 Nov 86).

2. "Why don't they go back home?" The Arabs to Arabia (and stop bothering the Iranians & the Israeli), the Chicanos to Mexico, our West Coast Asians to Asia, our Afro-Americans to blacks areas of Africa, and (uhuhuh) the Europeans to Europe (including me, to leave the piece of Mashpee Indian territory I "own" on Cape Cod). God is in no mood for people/land re-association, though he's been said to have "fixed beforehand the limits of the places" for the races to live (Ac.17.26, an instance of Paul's becoming "all things to all"); and nobody else could force it on humanity; and humanity's wantings are a crazyquilt of landlove, xenomisia, and nativisms, all working against each. We all know the slogans of those wanting to hold, for their way of life, the land they have ("honoring" the ancestors, "patriotism," "loyalty," "the Father/Mother-land") and of those wanting to take over, displacing those in power ("imperialism," "colonialism," "racism," "classism," "sexism") and of those wanting to participate in power ("rights," "entitlements," "sexism," "racism," "classism," "democracy" as majority rule and/or minority rights). I'm not against geopolitical rhetoric; it's usu. easier on human dignity than is the alternative, viz coercion. But my hermeneutics of suspicion is ever alert to the +/- sanctions all these orators use for their land claims, for "rights," for "justice."

3. We've just prepared our garden for winter: annuals onto the compost piles, loving care for the perennials, green fertilizer to be turned in in the spring, big stuff sawed for the wood stove.... Don't want no other humans messin' with it, thank you. It's our land "culture," and we're motivated to make it beautiful and productive both because it's ours and because we have no fear that any critters, human or other, are going to interfere with our con-

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trol of it. Culture control, that's what it is. Add working the soil to working the society and you have dual culture control. Now, we couldn't have soil-culture control if the "original" (!) owners, the Mashpee Indians hereabouts, had society-culture control. Histo-culturally, they don't believe in land ownership--so I don't own my garden. But I want to own my garden (and use the rhetoric that I have a "right" to do so), so need a social control favorable to this wanting, so am happy that Cape Cod is under Euro-cultural control as genus and Anglo-cultural * control as species (so am happy with the CA Election '86 decision for English as that state's "official language," and hope Congress so declares for the country). (* The Constitution and all that.)

4. Six days ago I interviewed a newspaperman (please, not "-person") (and it wasn't a "newspaperwoman") who's on his country's largest morning paper and is daily up against the threat that his nation will lose its Eurocultural control. Schalk Schoombie is on "Die Beeld," South Africa's Afrikaans morning daily. During the conversation I grew in awareness that I enjoy the luxury of not having to worry about Eurocultural control of my country. In theory and in law, all citizens of the USA have the right to hold land and participate in such power as affects them, and none have to worry that our Anglo-culture (our way of conducting our public life as well as our private) will be swamped by another culture. In S.A., on the other hand, swamping is a looming possibility; the black culture may take over in spite of the Euro-training of all the now prominent black leaders. The USA/SA analogy won't wash: M.L.King, Jr. was after opening our society for black participation, but in SA the issue (in spite of the rhetoric of moderates) is white/black control.

5. Well, wouldn't it be simple justice that the blacks control SA as the whites control the USA? My answer: "Simple justice" exists only in the eristic rhetoric of the outs (who mean by it one thing) and the ins (who mean by it another). The majority, in or out, always make majority rule a characteristic of "justice"...If somebody says it would be justice for me to turn over my garden to the Mashpees, I'll say I'm more interested in something else than I am in "justice," which is only a relative value that has to take its chances along with other relative values--eg "peace." Currently it's popular to call my church, the UCC, a "justice-and-peace church"--our latest self-descriptive slogan. Seldom can human beings serve both these relative values, peace & justice, at the same time. Our advantages that we "enjoy" as humans, Americans, etc. depend on dimensions of "peace" that in turn are dependent on achievements (our ancestors and our own) of injustice, and we lose the advantages unless we can maintain the injustices on pain of loss of the dimensions of "peace" which form the environment of our advantages. To take a bio-example: We maintain our freedom from polio by unjust suppression of the polio virus...or doesn't the category-abstraction "justice" apply to nonhuman beings?

6. "God is a verb" said Bucky Fuller. What happens if we see-feel "justice" and "peace" as verbs? They cease to be Greeky abstractions tempting us to utopianism (which always leads to schizophrenia or violence), and they come open to the Semitic-dynamic concretions of the biblical critical consciousness, which centers in God rather than in human values & goals. Open yourself/yourselves to God's rule-realm & righteousness, and trust for the rest (Mt.6.33). On a grid with "justice"/"injustice" (and another with "peace"/"war") in one dimension & "old"/"new" in the other, study the implications.