

Now that Lech Walensa has the 1983 Nobel Peace Prize for his pacific leadership of Solidarnost, a movement to empower people whose government ideologically (and ironically) claims to be the empowerment of the people, the NPPCommittee's tendency is clear, viz., to give more UPs (uproar prizes, to rabblerousers who view the social order as unpeace, disorder) than QPs (quiet prizes, to oilers of troubled waters). At this, we Christians ought to be even more happy than some of us (not including me) are. From this, my mind runs out in several directions:

1. Pedagogy and politics, when well done, are lord-servant rather than servant-lord: the aim is not to control child/people for some heteronomous end set by parent/government, but to regulate circumstances for the autonomous end of maturity, i.e., of the "free exercise" of God-given personal/societal powers. To adapt a phrase from recent movements, power to the person and to the people (or, empowering the otherwise poor and oppressed). As I was surfcasting off our beach yesterday (10Oct83), "Nick," an "I'm-not-religious" ex-Marine almost entirely covered with tatoos, said a warm "Hi!" (in spite of and/or because of my previous effort to confront him for Jesus) and began to pass me on his shore-walk. I asked him to watch my cast, then show me how to improve it. He watched, then corrected me verbally and by demonstration. His demo lost me my lure: his muscles take a heavier line than mine. In penitence, he immediately drove home and brought me an identical lure + three more (total, about a \$14 gift!). "I'll be gentler with your line next time--if you want me to keep helping." Said I, "Please do!" After he had helped me (in skill and \$), he was more ready to listen to my witness. In addition to the observation that if you're with pole you have instant community among fisherfolk (as you have when you, with faith, or certainly with ordination, move into a church), some extrapolations from this experience can be made vis-a-vis the point of this thinksheet....All my fellowfishers were poor blacks I'd talked with before Nick showed up; all less poor at fishing than I (who'd surfcast only twice before in my whole life)....Here's what to do when you're top-dog: remember how you felt, and what happened to you, in former experiences when you were bottom-dog....Christian parenting/teaching/governing is not from top down (as lord-servant, i.e., service in the interest of power), but from top to bottom upwards (as servant-lord, i.e., the use of power to serve the power needs of child/pupil/people. The same truth: The power orientation that personalizes-humanizes is not from outside in (i.e., power-laid-on, which depersonalizes and dehumanizes) but from inside out. Again: The primary stance of top-dog (who has control responsibilities) is not power over but power with, in cooperation with, alongside of, in the interest and on behalf of--as Jesus over/with his disciples. ...After the fact, how easy it is to see how you could have been a better parent/teacher/executive--not to mention spouse (marriage being the only total relationship, with continuous mutual superiority/inferiority, and thus the best sociomodel for divine-human intimacy-communion).

2. The anthropilosophy (way of viewing humanity in context of cosmos/history/deity) of the USA's founders (parents/teachers/executives, aka. "Founding Fathers") was highly paradoxical. On the neg. side, they believed that "Man makes evil as naturally as bees make honey" (Wm. Golding, 1983 Nobel Prize in Literature): "original sin" and all that--so people cannot be trusted with power. On the pos. side, they believed in what I may call "primordial goodness" (that the preformative force behind and within all creation, including us, is the goodness of God)--so people must be trusted with power. (Rein. Niebuhr's balanced quote: The 1st makes democracy necessary, the 2nd makes it possible.) FF (the Founding Fathers) were thinking/talking

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about *their* powers/responsibilities vis-a-vis Europe, not vis-a-vis their wives/children/slaves or the aborigines. "The movements" beginning with the Civil War, crescendoing this past quarter-century, have been applying the FF anthroposophy to segments of the population other than the WASAM (White Anglo-Saxon Adult Male). The libertarian assumption, what I may term "the great surmise," is that this extrapolating (1) is legitimate, curvilinear with the human reality, and (2) can be straight-line, without adjustments. This libertarian assumption being the *what* and the *why*, egalitarianism is the how (bitingly put in reverse in Orwell's ANIMAL FARM when the master Pig says "We're all equal, but some of us are more equal than others")....The engines driving this great surmise are (1) Enlightenment rationalism (all humans being Aristotle's "rational animal," though Aris. would have been startled to hear his doctrines applied to any other than adult male Greeks); (2) FD (the USA founding documents, including the Federalist Papers); (3) civil and legal precedents in the working out of "the American way" in our history; (4) a rival egalitarian theory, viz., "Communism"; and (5) the American liberal "testimony book" of biblical interpretation (in hermeneutic theory-history, a "testimony book" is a traditional catena of quotations from sacred literature, used by leaders for sanctional force--which I call "the scriptural sanction"). (See, here, Robt. Bellah's "civil religion.")

3. At the moment, the outstanding hero/villain of antiegalitarianism is Interior Sect. Jas. Watt, who was fired (bureaucratized, "resigned") yesterday. Too much was his phrase, destined to quasi-immortality in the history of Am. rhetoric, "2 blacks, 2 women, 2 Jews, and a cripple." I watched (on TV) his body language as he got off this roundhouse punch; it was a nonvituperative gibe at the current American preference for what I call "pollocracy" (the rule of the many sectors) vs. aristocracy (the rule of "the best" understood as "nobles" understood as divinely-sanctioned uppers with *noblesse oblige*) and meritocracy (the rule of the most able). Antiegalitarians claim that "representative democracy" in the advanced forms of tokenism and sectors representation ("2 blacks," etc.) is a trade-off between meritocracy and quality: egalitarians claim that pollocracy will result either in no diminution of quality or in an actual increase thereof. Present facts do not tilt toward either position.

4. Some impediments to people-power: (1) Any vice-grip ideology, which effects repeated failures to examine reality (e.g., USA in Vietnam and Latin Am.); (2) The dogma of "national sovereignty" (dead Marines reported today, 26Oct83: 219, Beirut Airport; 6, Granada, which is suffering bloody retribalization); (3) Hopelessness and cynicism (instead of viewing breakdowns as invitations to breakthroughs); (4) Hypo/hyper-politicization (W.B. Yeats' "The Second Coming"): "The best lack all conviction, while the worst / Are full of passionate intensity"); (5) Lack of political skills (analogy: as a passive solar house moderates interior temperature-changes, so do reason and democracy in a state); (6) Extremism, violating the limits of the permissible (by God, reality, human nature; Nemesis forever defeats Hybris, which is a wag's description of scifi); (7) The people's unthinking acceptance and promotion (as idea-consumers) of power-interested ideas (coming down on them from the idea-producers); (7) Continuing thralldom to the ghosts of old prides, prejudices, fears.

5. A note of hope from WCC/Nairobi (p.45 of official report, BREAKING BARRIERS): "We cannot leave any area of human life and suffering without hope. We regret that some reduce liberation from sin and evil to social and political dimensions, just as we regret that others limit liberation to the private and eternal dimensions."