Liberty University

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200909 OBITER DICTA: EARLY ADVENT 2009

Steven Alan Samson, *Liberty University*

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Sunday, November 29

http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/geraldwarner/100018268/swiss-voters-lied-to-pollsters-banned-minarets-soon-the-international-peasants-revolt-could-engulf-immigration-climate-change-and-even-dave/

The Swiss pollsters were caught by surprise. When a real vote is held, popular anger may very well get registered. So, just as I am fond of a little Danish, I'm looking forward to indulging the Burgundian-Swiss side of my heritage (Hoover/Huber/Hubere).

I may have to get a Swiss magnet-flag to join the Swedish one on the refrigerator. There is usually little to cheer about in the news from Europe. I remember when the first mosque in 500 years was opened in Spain. King Juan Carlos was part of the dedication. Yet I dare say there has not been a church on the Arabian peninsula since roughly 635 AD. But turnabout is fair play. When can we expect a Saudi prince to preside over a ribbon-cutting for a new cathedral in Mecca? I wonder how it is that the Germans give no quarter to the Scientologists but then turn Muslim quarters in their major cities into no-go zones. So it is about time for a little push-back.

The Swiss, like the Norwegians (also part of my heritage), are still willing to behave like nation-states. And I won't wrote off the Danes or the Brits just yet. But there is an article in tomorrow's Times of London that the United Kingdom Independence Party, which holds a dozen seats in the European Parliament, is faced with a rebellion in its ranks. Some members have complained that the newly elected leader does not wish to contest the next general election in Britain but plans instead to throw the party's support behind the Tories if the Tories will commit to a referendum on the Treaty of Lisbon. I have read that some MEPs are threatening to resign.

Monday 30

http://www.climatedepot.com/a/4099/Pressure-Mounts-Scientist-from-U-of-East-Anglia-Suggests-UN-IPCC-has-run-its-coursepoliticizes-climate-scienceauthoritarian-and-exclusive-form-of-knowledge-production

NOTE: All of this illustrates Thomas Kuhns' thesis in *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*. Here is a top level climate scientist (not one of the skeptics) saying that something like *perestroika* and *glasnost* is needed to recover public trust.

The IPCC is the UN's Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change. The AR5 is the Fifth Assessment Report.

http://www.gazettetimes.com/news/local/article_07df51b2-cd5a-51c6-a441-601dbea0048c.html

This clipping is a tribute to Fred Decker, a meteorologist at Oregon State University who was an early television weatherman and was also a forensic

meteorologist. He developed correspondence courses that he continued to teach after retirement.

Fred introduced me to the skeptic side of the global warming controversy. I first met him just after he had served as assistant undersecretary of education in the Reagan Administration. I was attending my first Philadelphia Society meeting in 1985, a year after we moved from Oregon to Indiana. Along with Otto Scott and Russell Kirk, Fred later sponsored me into the Society and I was made a member in 1990.

Fred was active in the Mont Pelerin, Philadelphia, and Mt. Hood Societies, which are the chief international, national, and local classical liberal/economic conservative gatherings. I first met Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn in the early 80s at a meeting and dinner sponsored by the Mt. Hood Society.

A couple of months after Fred and his wife passed, my wife and I got back home for a long-delayed visit. I went through Fred's library and gleaned a number of volumes relating to conservative politics. Rainy, his daughter, mentioned how the whole Decker family had spent time with the Kuehnelt-Leddihns in Austria in the early 1960s. I am not sure that Erik ever knew of my connection with the Deckers. In fact, Sally and I knew Rainy before I met Fred. She as a member of our church, Good Shepherd Community Church, in the early 80s and Sally was the church secretary for two years. At the time I edited a public affairs newsletter and was working on my doctoral dissertation. This is when I first came into the Mt. Hood Society orbit.

A few years ago Fred helped me secure an invitation to the Mont Pelerin meeting in Salt Lake City, but the admission fee was too steep. Perhaps someday.

More recently, from long distance, I tried to help Fred find a home for the papers of the Mt. Hood Society and University Professors for Academic Orders, but without success. Like the papers of the Church League of America and so many other conservative organizations, they appear to have been scattered to the winds. And now, with the passing of Ed Prentice and Fred Decker, I believe the Mt. Hood Society is no more. Too many of the institutions founded by conservative have not been well funded and have consequently withered away. The spirit of the time remains adamantly statist. The blind still lead the blind.

As my friend Erik used to point out, the choice has long been between the belt-tightening party and the Santa Claus party. He would shake his head and give his punch line: "Nobody shoots Santa Claus!"

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/christopherbooker/6679082/Climate-change-this-is-the-worst-scientific-scandal-of-our-generation.html

http://townhall.com/columnists/MichaelBarone/2009/11/30/global_warming_consensus_garbage_in,_garbage_out

http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/climatedate-document-database-from-pjtvpajamas-media/

More on the climate change travesty, including a data base.

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/environment/article6936328.ece

Before Andrew Breitbart emptied the ACORN dumpster in California, he should have gotten to the University of East Anglia. Perhaps "garbology" is going to make a comeback.

http://pajamasmedia.com/victordavishanson/change-we-can-believe-in/2/

I always enjoy reading Victor Davis Hanson's columns. I picked up his *Who Killed Homer?* on one of many trips to Stanford in the late 90s for surgery and post-surgical treatment at the Sleep Disorders Center. (This is an unpaid and unsolicited plug for the life-saving work being done there for sleep apneacs like myself). On another of my trips to the Bay Area I bought his *Mexifornia* and used it in class.

As someone who attended teachers college after I earned the M.A. in political science, I can testify that his dim view of the products of teacher education programs is spot on. The program in which I enrolled for three quarters was essentially kindergarten for late adolescents. I was granted a teaching certificate after seven months. But what I have learned about real teaching has come from three decades of doing it – through much trial and a lot of error, no thanks either to the teachers or the coursework. The most important product of the educational credential mills seems to be socialization into the latest, most up-to-date NEA-approved curricula that embody the Hegelian spirit of John Dewey's *A Common Faith*.

Vero possumus, BTW, means "Yes we can!

http://frontpagemag.com/2009/11/30/ohio-imposes-sharia-on-a-muslim-girl-by-jamie-glazov/

More on the unfortunate Riqfa Bary. I hope she will be able to tell her story someday: uncoerced and truly free. Right now she is isolated as effectively as anyone else who ends up suffering Stockholm Syndrome.

On another note. I received Vittorio Giannini's Piano Concerto earlier this month and played it for the first time last week on my return. I was bowled over by it. Why has his work been ignored? I also discovered Mark O'Connor's Quartet last week while listening to a classical station after delivering dresses to my daughter-in-law's dress shop in Savannah. I have ordered it.

I have attached below the 2006 review of another Giannini recording by Thomas Bertonneau, who teaches in New York and writes for the Brussels Journal. I have his book on science fiction but have not had a chance to read it yet. I would add to the book he recommends two books in my collection, both out of print: Petr Beckmann's *Musical Musings* and Robert R. Reilly's *Surprised by Beauty*. The late Beckmann published *Access to Energy* (which has been taken over by Arthur Robinson). Beckmann was a professor of electrical engineering at the University of Colorado (my alma mater), an advocate of nuclear power, and a global warming skeptic). Reilly is a national security lecturer, former director of Voice of America, music reviewer, and a fellow member of the Philadelphia Society.

Who is Vittorio Giannini? Thanks to the work of musicologist Walter Simmons, who also produced this new Naxos "Wind Classics" CD, we can now place Giannini (1902 - 1966) in his proper context. As Simmons explains in "Voices in the Wilderness" (2005), Giannini belongs to that group of mid-Twentieth Century American composers who refused to assimilate to the austere strictures of the Second Viennese School when its idiom became the mandatory mode of expression in elite musical institutions after World War Two. Instead, the traditionalist composers availed themselves of the "tonal" language of the great Nineteenth Century tradition; they used the musical forms associated with the Baroque and Classical periods. The musical establishment, dedicated to the hoots and squeaks of the post-Webern ethos, did its best to relegate traditionalists to the margins, often treating them vituperatively in the commentaries. Lately, saner appreciation has begun to return some of these composers to performance, at least on disc. Giannini, true to his Italian ancestry, concentrated on the writing of operas in an expressive style related to the Puccini idiom; he also wrote a considerable body of purely instrumental music, including the five works on the present album. All five reflect Giannini's fascination in the 1950s and 60s with that characteristically American medium, the wind band or symphonic wind ensemble.

Is not all music for wind ensemble or band second-rate? Some classical music aficionados (I include myself) might bring to the wind ensemble repertory a prejudice, associating such music with the nattering off-key rat-a-tat-blatt of their respective high-school marching bands. Wind-ensemble music has, however, a long and honorable pedigree going back to the partitas and cassations of the Eighteenth Century. Haydn and Mozart wrote graciously and seriously for winds; at least three of Mozart's wind-ensemble scores strive towards the symphonic. The Funeral and Triumphal Symphony by Berlioz is a Nineteenth-Century development of the trend, while in the Twentieth Century Richard Strauss contributed two large-scale wind-symphonies, written at the end of his life. Paul Hindemith then endorsed the medium with an impressive Symphony in B-Flat for Band in the early 1950s, as did Roy Harris around the same time. Then there is Harris' younger contemporary, Vincent Persichetti, who made something of a specialty of serious compositions for band.

What about the playing? Giannini's wind-ensemble scores, like these others, definitely belong in the category of serious music. There is no writing down for amateur forces. The best-known item on this beautifully played and gorgeously recorded Naxos program, the Symphony No. 3 for Band (1958), appeared famously on a Mercury LP, close to the time of its completion in score. The legendary and long-lived Frederick Fennell took the lead on that occasion with the Eastman Rochester Wind Ensemble. Fennell's recording will always be bright and convincing, but plenty of room remains for other views. Tom Bennett and the University of Houston Wind Ensemble together bring a different interpretation to Giannini that competes effectively with the benchmark Mercury registration. Fennell treats Giannini's score as a robust work for band that incidentally has the outlines of a standard four-movement symphony; Bennett treats it as a serious and brilliant essay in symphonic writing that the composer incidentally has scored for winds and percussion. Bennett seeks a somewhat "softer" sound than Fennell and adopts a somewhat more lyrical approach in the two inner movements.

What is the simplest test to demonstrate the merits of this disc? Listeners can take the musical measure of the program by sampling the opening movement at about five minutes in: the solemn second subject returns, chorale-like, in a quiet reiteration. I would call it one of those "gooseflesh" moments that lift a performance out of the ordinary and into the extraordinary. Producer Simmons has told me, in a generous communication, that Bennett requires his performers to be able not just to play but also to sing their parts. This preparation is evident in the songlike character of the chorale passage mentioned above, where the subtlety of intonation is of the highest order. Throughout, the virtues of

Giannini's music put themselves in evidence: clarity of form, memorable melodic profile, ingenious scoring, and emotional variety.

Does the title Variations and Fugue portend an exercise in academic dryness? No! The Variations and Fugue (1965) is a work that reflects Giannini's fondness for baroque procedures, but it is also the most harmonically adventurous of his wind-ensemble scores. The variation-section of the piece conforms in plan to the device known as a chaconne or passacaglia, a strict developmental technique anchored to a steady slow ostinato in the bass. The great Eighteenth-Century model is Bach's Passacaglia and Fugue, especially as orchestrated by Stokowski for the Philadelphia Orchestra. Giannini creates a Bach-like grandeur, which the players persuasively render in its relentless graduated build-up to the fugue. The precision of the playing in the skittering double fugue lucidly reveals Giannini's marvelous mastery of contrapuntal structures. The players, all of them young, understand the composer's logic fully; consequently so does the audience. The first and fourth movements of the Symphony also feature exciting fugal moments. These too come across with remarkable clarity; Giannini never merely counts time with busy passagework, but rather he always ties the counterpoint integrally to the development. Collectors might want to seek out Giannini's Concerto Grosso, for strings, on an Albany CD, under the direction of David Amos; the Concerto is another fully convincing neo-baroque composition.

What is the relation of the remainder of the program to the two large-scale works? The three shorter pieces exhibit Giannini's craftsmanship and fluency (and his sense of humor, at least as it concerns the Overture). While they do not rise to the same level of artistic achievement as the larger scores, they will not disappoint purchasers of the disc. I strongly recommend this CD. I recommend along with it Simmons' excellent book "Voices in the Wilderness," which devotees of American music must add to their libraries.

http://timescorrespondents.typepad.com/charles_bremner/2009/11/things-french-kings-never-said.html

Here is a collection of famous but apocryphal French quotations.

http://www.firstthings.com/blogs/spengler/2009/11/30/cleanliness-and-purity-in-the-practice-of-jesus/

A meditation on purity.

Tuesday, December 1

http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/redeeming-sarah/

David Solway has some fun trashing the eminently trashable political and media establishments. As a Canadian, like Mark Steyn, he can say such things out loud.

http://www.americanthinker.com/2009/12/palin_and_the_future.html

Here is an American saying much the same as the Canadian. Yesterday I wrote about educational credentialism (based on my own experience) and here is a columnist who understands that our education factories are essentially designed to hold children back rather than spur them onward. I told my students yesterday that public outrage is reaching an ever-higher pitch. Ross Perot is still publishing his charts. Bloggers are the new minute men. When the hour was bleak and there was a dearth of qualified men, Deborah was chosen to be judge. I told

my students that we had named our youngest daughter after the Biblical Deborah. Two of my students are preparing to deploy. Perhaps it is stouthearted women who will again take the lead on the home front.

http://pajamasmedia.com/claudiarosett/when-do-we-get-to-read-the-rest-of-the-un-emails-on-climate-change/

Climategate as another example of United Nations nest-feathering. Gotta feed the commissariat.

http://yidwithlid.blogspot.com/2009/11/ipcc-scientist-confirms-global-warming.html

Another climate scientist (and an agnostic on global warming) discusses the IPCC skullduggery.

http://www.bookwormroom.com/2009/11/30/a-literary-take-on-scientific-corruption/

You have to love a blog that can draw on a Dorothy Sayers plotline and then argue that something like the Cloward-Piven strategy may be the incentive for a few climate scientists whose book-cooking is raising global temperatures one calorie at a time. Wait, doesn't that resemble a plot point from Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Earth's Holocaust?" Perhaps we are witnessing another "Bonfire of the Vanities." Savonarola redux!

http://townhall.com/columnists/PhyllisSchlafly/2009/12/01/where_are_the_men?page=full&comments=true

One of the books in my library is The Feminization of American Culture by Ann Douglas. Phyllis Schlafly updates Douglas's thesis by showing how the education establishment promotes misandy or misandry: hatred of boys and men. Dumbing down the curriculum has consequences, as any teacher can see. If the end product of national health at all resembles the end product of public education, then we may as well content ourselves with rearranging the hospital furniture and drawing lots on the Christmas turkey. Because this bureaucratic Titanic is going to drag us all down with it.

Wednesday 2

http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2009/12/graph_of_the_day_for_december_1.html

These days I take my (relative) good news where I can find it. I remember George McGovern. Apparently, the President is no George McGovern when it comes to defense expenditures.

http://www.americanthinker.com/2009/12/the_new_ruling_class.html

Here is a science-fiction vision of a possible future in which the wealthy and powerful extend their lives to become, as H. G. Wells put it, "men like gods." Although this ambition is beyond the reach of the Corzines, Soroses, and Gores of today, it is certainly an age-old dream: Babel. In fact, this dream resembles what globalists seek in designing a "new world order:" an immortality of the sort

that historically belongs to monarchies, corporations, and other rivals of the Body of Christ. I remember when Alex Comfort. M.D., turned his attention from marketing *The Joy of Sex* to what he expected would be the sublime joy of immortality.

I plan to take the writer's advice and get Gordon Woods' book. Our aristocracy is an outgrowth of the century-old Progressive movement and the influence of the Fabian socialists. It is time to at last unmask it and expose it to the sunlight.

This just arrived (below). Of course, the question about funding, either directly or indirectly, from Communist sources is not answered (the KGB remarked is ignored), but it is always instructive to hear how a question is not answered.

I am also following some of the controversy over Sarkozy's "triumphalist" attitude about marginalizing the City. Alistair Darling appears to be dismayed. I will be interested in hearing more.

This is a mailing from Pavel Stroilov:

Watch our Red Baroness being cornered by David Campbell Bannerman at the European Parliament's foreign policy committee today: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_XE7J05FQpE

She does not look very relaxed, does she?
And please note that apart from stalling about Communist Party money, her answer implies she still likes the idea of unilateral disaramement. Perhaps she should now be challenged to condemn the goal of "unilateral abandonment by Britain of nuclear weapons, nuclear bases and nuclear alliances" (if she wants a policy question)?
Pavel

http://www.americanthinker.com/2009/12/the_palin_brand.html

I am ready to take the pledge on these "common sense values." Much better than the "Kool-Aid" the country drank last year -- probably far less fattening and with a much better aftertaste. The aftertaste's a killer.

http://frontpagemag.com/2009/12/02/preparing-for-global-collapse-by-vasko-kohlmayer/print/

The total indebtedness of the country is moving rapidly toward $100 trillion. Spain, which was the great 16C European power ended that century going through a series of bankruptcies. By the 18C and the War of the Spanish Succession it had been reduced to the status of a pawn. As Mark Steyn points out, the West is putting itself out of business by failing to reproduce. Yes, we are mortgaging future generations but they are thumbing their noses back at us by refusing to appear.

The politicians appear to be dancing on the deck of the Titanic (I have a recording of the music that was played at the time of the sinking). All this reminds me of an old Twilight Zone episode in which a young couple (newlyweds, perhaps) is taken aboard a ship filled with elderly couples. Fortunately for them, as I recall, they were finally put into a dinghy and wished Bon Voyage. It turns out turns the ship was bound for Eternity. I hope that my grandchildren

can be put ashore and avoid the sort of servitude being foisted on them by a bankrupt political elite.

http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,664753,00.html

Der Spiegel calls the President's address last night the "least truthful" he has given. That sounds like a rather strained effort at flattery. It lacks the dagger-like finesse of Mary McCarthy's clever putdown of Lillian Hellman ("I once said in an interview that every word she writes is a lie, including 'and' and 'the'").

http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/jamesdelingpole/100018556/climategate-its-all-unravelling-now/

Here is a summary of "Climategate" from one of the major sources: James Delingpole. His website is on my Favorites list.

http://pajamasmedia.com/phyllischesler/2009/12/02/the-911-of-1859-is-al-qaeda-an-abolitionist-movement/

An example of the radical feminist Phyllis Chesler's usual incisiveness. But since I am no John Brown apologist, I was less troubled by the comparison with Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, although the NYT strains to elevate the sins of the one somewhat in order to pardon or explain away those of the other. The body count Brown left was certainly smaller than Mohammed's, but the brutal murders in Bleeding Kansas in May 1856 need to be added to the inventory. And the attack on Harper's Ferry in 1858 was an opening shot in the Civil war. What both men had or have in common is the way they followed the Russian nihilist prescription by emphasizing the "propaganda of the Deed."

The links (below) certainly suggest the validity of Stroilov's conclusion.

Someone has asked me why Ashton's claim about the CND money coming from bucket collections cannot be true. Below is my answer - I thought some of you might find it useful:

The CND's annual conference in 1982 introduced audited accounts, but specifically voted to keep the identities of the donors secret.
They certainly did have a secret list of names. In his letter to the Times attacking us (http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/letters/article6933782.ece), Bruce Kent reminds: "I even offered to let the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of Westminster inspect our list of donors but no one pressed that option." Which means there was a list. And the Mail on Sunday quotes from the minutes of a meeting in February 1982: 'Cathy Ashton reported that we need to expand our list of "rich and famous" people and organisations who can be approached for donations.'
(http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1229940/Cathy-Ashton-EUs-new-Foreign-Minister-Treasurer-CND.html#ixzz0YaP6IBvk)
So, she lies about the buckets - the names of donors were known to the CND, but kept secret.
In fact, the secrecy of CND's sources of funding was raised by many researchers in 1970s and 1980s, such as Graham Wootton (Pressure Groups in Britain, 1720-1970, Penguin, London 1975) and Paul Mercer ("Peace" of the Dead. The truth behind the nuclear disarmers. Policy Research Publications, 1986).

Thursday 3

http://www.steynonline.com/content/view/2693/30/

For some historical (and hysterical) context on the climate debate, here is Mark's Steyn's column from the early 2001, a Space Odyssey.

http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/local/Former-NASA-climate-scientist-pleads-guilty-to-contract-fraud-8613137-78268862.html

Top climate scientist convicted of contract fraud.

http://www.worldmag.com/webextra/16158

A happier ending to the Honduras crisis -- no thanks to the Obama Administration. For a while it appeared we were returning to the bad old days of gunboat diplomacy and Woodrow Wilson's "I will teach the Latin American republics to elect good men." Hondurans were spared a forced choice between restoring a Chavezista, having last week's election results repudiated by the international community, and the prospect of having to vote with their feet (already of a familiar scenario). Fortunately, the Obama Administration backed off. The outcome of the election was never in doubt. Hondurans clearly did not wish to end up in Chavez's maw. Here the plight of neighboring Nicaragua was an object lesson. Honduras, the poorest of the Latin American states, needs social and political stability if a good investment climate is ever to develop.

http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/why-the-swiss-were-right-to-prohibit-construction-of-minarets/

A lengthy rebuttal of complaints about the Swiss ban on (new) minarets. One of the innovations of the Reformation era, state churches, has long been provoking the demise of Christianity in Europe. Bureaucracy tends to crush the vitality and vibrancy of faith. The Investiture Struggle of the Middle Ages ended largely in the absorption of the church by the state in the lands of the Reformation. I explored this history in my doctoral dissertation: "Crossed Swords: Entanglements Between Church and State in America."

The radical theologies critiqued by Hege Storhaug have a much longer history than the demographic problem that now drives unassimilated Muslims into the heart of a Europe that once repulsed Muslim military invasions. According to Fereydoun Hoveyda's The Broken Crescent, Mauwdudi and the Jamaat-i-Islami he created in 1941 (rooted in Deobandism, which is a variant of Wahhabism) drew on Fascism and Nazism to create a cadre "of dedicated followers in order to capture political leadership."

Although I do not unreservedly share the author's view that Christ "revoked brutal edicts that dated back to the time of Moses," his illustration about how Muhammad dealt with an adulterous woman is certainly instructive in its difference.

Storhaug's bottom line is worth pondering: "tax money is being used to spread the ideologies of people like Mauwdudi and Al-Shabab in supposedly free countries." This is the price of establishing a state church. Under the regime of political correctness, all religions are equal and thus all equally merit subsidization. What the Supreme Court decided in the first Mormon Case of 1878, it could scarcely be expected to hold if it were not already a precedent. Back then, the Court cited Francis Lieber's association of polygamy with despotism. But today a slippery slope argument about a practice's association with despotism would not rise to the dignity of a constitutional dictum.

http://www.spectator.co.uk/print/politics/all/5592733/its-not-just-the-swiss-all-europe-is-ready-to-revolt.thtml

It is still a truism that "all politics is local." Politics as a concept has no meaning in the context of the European Union because local and even national jurisdictions have now been superseded by an overlay of bureaucracy which is the very antithesis of "transparency." Indeed, it is the very definition of "opaque." As a consequence, citizens of the neo-sovereign European Union may register their complaints by attacking symbolic targets rather than participating in referenda on real issues. I like the phrase: "Education by death." When democracy dies, what other recourse is there but to make symbolic gestures? Still, there are always going to be a few obstreperous trouble makers who spoil the party because they just can't accept that they have a duty to "eat, drink, and . . . die."

http://www.spectator.co.uk/print/politics/all/5592418/the-minister-for-hizb-ut-tahrir.thtml

I guess it is official now. "Any topic or subject that emanates from a culture or viewpoint of life that differs from the Islamic aqeeda should not be taught at any level. . . . Subjects such as . . . foreign history, foreign languages and foreign literature should be taught only at the higher level of education with the view of refuting their ideas and exposing their falsehood." Non-Muslims need not apply to the *shari'a*-approved universities of the future Britain.

http://roadtothemiddleclass.blogspot.com/2009/12/entrepreneurial-virtual-newsroom.html

So this is what I have been doing. So my currently unnamed semi-blog is really a revival of my old public affairs newsletters from the early 1980s: "Comment" and the *SaltShakers, Inc.*, newsletter. But now I can claim to be a small cog in a Virtual Newsroom that is the very embodiment of Hayek's "spontaneous order." I like that. Better that than the rather disorderly outbursts of spontaneous energy that count among the sins of my youth.

http://spectator.org/archives/2009/12/01/biggest-story-of-2009-the-rise/

Here is the original article on the Virtual Newsroom. Move over Woodward and Bernstein. We're printing All the News That Is Fit to Exhume. Let those who make a killing by spiking stories beware. Our Scarlet Pimpernels will penetrate the most powerful firewalls to rescue the news from premature burial in corporate/institutional vaults.

http://www.christianitytoday.com/bc/columns/bookoftheweek/090323.html?start=1

Here is a Liberty insider's review of a book by a Liberty outsider who took off a term from Brown University somewhat in the manner of an anthropologist examining a foreign culture. I know a little something about that. The father of an old friend wrote the first major anthropological study of a European culture in the 1930s: *The Irish Countryman*.

As for Brown University, I knew a distinguished scholar who finally left there in the early 1990s. He told me a few stories while we were both living in Florida. Before and since then I've heard reports from others who have had Ivy League experiences or experiences with Ivy League students. One-upmanship is the same everywhere. But I am not at all surprised that the young Brown student had to work twice as hard at Liberty. I have taught at a dozen schools. I have never had to soften the academic rigor of my courses.

Like the reviewer, I also have had some experience with culture shock: for example, moving from Denver to rural Oregon in 1975, my first visit to the deep South in 1984, and moving to a small city in Indiana that same year. It is always challenging to distinguish what is evangelical from what is Christian, Bible-Belt from what is Southern, and regional from what is generically American.

As for evangelical Christianity, I was not introduced to it in any way shape or form until my late 20s after I had completed my master's degree. In fact, I reacted sharply when I first tried to read something by Francis Schaeffer two years earlier. But I came around.

Life for me has been a series of transformations. Along the way I cannot say that I have lost anything that has not been returned in greater measure. Hope leads me on even when, especially when, I might otherwise hold back.

Friday 4

http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/dutch-gore-wrong-on-snows-of-kilimanjaro/

This is what happens when climate scientists fail to exercise "due diligence and do the necessary legwork. A (lazy) penchant for extrapolating from the data that confirms a thesis too often leads to suppressing data that contradicts it.

http://www.americanthinker.com/printpage/?url=http://www.americanthinker.com/2009/12/cannibalizing_america.html

The proof of "death panels" is in the eating -- as the funding for Medicare is diverted and eaten away to finance the new single-payer health care system. Shortages caused by the government's inability to raise marginal tax rates will be an inevitable effect of the inefficiencies -- indeed the sheer waste -- of centralized bureaucratic control. The resulting state of emergency will necessitate an administrative system of triage-style rationing. In his book on "death by government," R. J. Rummel clearly shows that the state, not war, is the greatest unnatural cause of death.

Do we really believe that genocide is what happens to other people? As H. G. Wells put it in his novel-length tract, *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress Upon Human Life and Thought* (1902): "Procreation is an avoidable thing for sane persons of even the most furious passions, and the men of the new republic will hold that the procreation of children who, by the circumstances of their parentage, must be diseased bodily or mentally -- I do not think it will be difficult for the medical science of the coming time to define such circumstances -- is absolutely the most loathsome of all conceivable sins. The men of the new republic will not be squeamish either in facing or inflicting death, because they will have a fuller sense of the possibilities of life than we possess. They will have an ideal that will make killing worth the while; like Abraham, they will have the faith to kill, and they will have no superstitions about death. They will naturally regard the modest suicide of incurably melancholy or diseased or helpless persons as a high and courageous act of duty rather than a crime (323-25)."

The 1970s film "Soylent Green" may have been meant as a satire but it seems less farfetched today. The revival of Progressive-era eugenics -- to which Wells and his one-time lover, Margaret Sanger, adhered -- together with its elaborate system of castes essentially threaten to cannibalize those who entrust their lives to the tender mercies of the state.

http://www.newsmax.com/headlines/grassley_obama_healthcare/2009/12/03/294113.html?s=al&promo_code=929B-1

I remember when the Republicans threatened to use the "nuclear option" a few years ago. I told everyone who would listen that this was a really bad idea because it would then set a precedent. The nuclear option as finally withdrawn after a group of "moderates" on both sides of the aisle agreed to allows hearings to proceed, thus ending the logjam, stopping the filibusters, and permitting the hearings on nominees to proceed.

Today the shoe is on the other foot. Republicans, I told you so! "What goes around, comes around" must rank with the law of gravity as an inviolable fact of nature. Your rank partisanship of a few years back may give us yet another confirmation of Lenin's quip: "The capitalists will sell us the rope with which we will hang them!"

Is this such a novel idea? It certainly happened in the 1950s with a different sort of filibuster -- the Soviet veto at the United Nations. How about trying this scenario on for size? "Secretary of State Dean Acheson conceived of a way of skirting the USSR by empowering the General Assembly. . . . The resolution specified that the General Assembly could be convened in an Emergency Special Session and could recommend the use of armed force." "So what?," people may ask. They ignore history. Or as Garet Garrett put it in "The Revolution Was," people forget their Aristotle. The destruction of legal and constitutional safeguards is always an invitation to mischief. "Acheson's resolution opened up a Pandora's box in the UN system, as it would lead to repeated attempts to erode the Security Council's authority. . . . Thus, by June 1967, it would be the USSR convening an Emergency Special Session of General Assembly, in this case in opposition to the United States and Israel" (Dore Gold, *Tower of Babble*, pp. 75, 76).

The nuclear option could prove to be the straw that breaks this camel's back. If people take a certain measure of comfort in polls that show declining support for the proposed national health care scam, I suggest they cast their eyes across the water at the European Union. As a "constitution," the Treaty of Lisbon was defeated twice in referenda by the French and the Dutch. So it was re-titled as a "treaty" and set into motion once again. Even then, it was defeated by the Irish, but the results were reversed the following year (through a combination of carrots and sticks), and the treaty was subsequently ratified without any public consent. Surely Californians can understand how the process works!

I expect that this is how it will be with our own latest political Ponzi scheme unless someone drives a stake through its heart. I just love how democratically all these Democrats are behaving. We need to remember this come election day before elections become hopelessly corrupted and compromised.

Saturday 5

http://pajamasmedia.com/michaelledeen/2009/12/03/the-iranian-time-bombs/?print=1

Here is a piece that details Ahmadinejad's shuttle diplomacy in Latin America and the development of an Iranian fifth column. A podcast linked to the article details a warning about Iranian subversion issued on Wednesday by Alberto Nisman, the chief prosecutor in the 1994 bombing case in Argentina. Ledeen also quotes a speech by the Grand Ayatollah Montazeri, who has been in the forefront of the opposition to what Ledeen regards as a dying regime.

http://www.brusselsjournal.com/node/4191

The European Union has now acquired most of the attributes of a state, including its own citizenry, but not the ability to mandate war and bind its members to participate. Yet it supersedes the European Economic Community. Its member states have renounced most of their sovereignty through what the author calls "a constitutional revolution by stealth."

The word constitution has been stricken from the original document that was rejected by the voters of France and the Netherlands three years ago. Yet the Treaty of Lisbon is a constitution in all but name. Shakespeare could have had fun satirizing this bit of wordplay in Romeo and Juliet. What's in a name?

In some respects the new European Union hearkens back to the loosely knit Holy Roman Empire, which bound much of Europe through a common legal system and was presided over by a ruler whose vassals included kings and princes and who at one time claimed to be the vicar of Christ. And like the Holy Roman Empire, to use Voltaire's quip, this new Union will be neither holy, Roman, nor an empire. But be sure to look for the Union label. The sovereign nation-states of Old Europe and New Europe are coming down with a bad case of laryngitis now that a faceless bureaucracy is finding its voice.

http://www.brusselsjournal.com/node/4188

Here is another piece that provides some background on the constitutional revolution. Vladimir Bukovsky, with whom I have corresponded, used to lecture at

Edward Rozek's summer institute at the University of Colorado. He and Pavel Stroilov, who has been frequently cited in the British press lately, collaborated on a 40 page booklet, *EUSSR*, that draws on Soviet documents to show the Leftist character of the constitutional revolution that has been orchestrated for more than two decades by socialists and Europhiles. About four years ago they gave me permission to use EUSSR in my Politics of Europe class. I continue to do so. Their documentation is increasingly coming to light in British political discussions. At last what has long been hidden in dark places is being revealed. May the secrets of the Fabian transmission belt and the American Progressive movement be drawn out of the crannies and exposed to full public view.

http://www.firstthings.com/blogs/spengler/2009/11/30/cleanliness-and-purity-in-the-practice-of-jesus/

I read this a few days ago but it is worth mentioning. It connects purity and cleanliness to service, to stewardship. We are to develop a true servant's heart -- "for out of it are the issues of life."

http://www.csmonitor.com/2009/1205/p09s01-coop.html

Ayaan Hirsi Ali addresses the problem of political Islam and its impact on Europe. Contrary to the opinion of European elites, towering minarets are expressions of a sense of political entitlement. Those politicians and intellectuals that George Orwell called "indeterminates" and that Roger Scruton calls "the culture of repudiation" regard Switzerland's ban on the construction of new minarets as xenophobic. Even if that were the case, how does this ban substantially differ from the closing of Mecca to non-Muslims? But, as they are likely to respond, this is a religious and not a racial prohibition. Well, so be it. The minaret ban is not racially motivated, either. The trouble with the western "indeterminates" who object to such regulations are not at concerned when Christian symbols or practices are prohibited. They that rush to the defense of religion are not believers themselves. They are blind and deaf in this regard. Why should they be taken seriously. Moral indignation is the calling of these cantankerous naggers. With the consolidation of the European Union, Europeans may now look forward to their own confederacy of dunces. In the tradition of Robespierre, the Voice of Virtue, we may wish to style it "the Republic of Scolds."

http://www.melaniephillips.com/articles-new/?p=697

What Spengler said about cleanliness and purity in the previous mailing applies to health care generally and nursing specifically.

It is one of the chief functions of religion to ensure conditions favorable to spiritual communion. For example, the practice of "fencing the table" at communion is a security function. Ritual cleanliness as a spiritual discipline has its place. So does the securing of borders and other forms of boundary-maintenance in social, political, and cultural life. The first calling of government is to protect and defend its members. Antiseptic surgical instruments and special surgical facilities are similarly protected by their own defense perimeters

A quango, in British parlance, is a quasi-autonomous non-governmental organization: something like our US Postal Service. The perennial question is how to get diseased institutions to "clean up their act." *Obsta principiis* is the first line of defense. At best, checks and balances are a delaying tactic to buy time against those who would divert institutions from true public service. We understand the nature of the problem when we say to the scam artist: "Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame of me." Unfortunately, we treat our political institutions like forces of nature to which we must submit and conform rather than as unruly and abusive servants who must be rebuked, disciplined, and, if necessary, thrown out of the house.