

TO BELIEVE

How people relate to their beliefs is none of my business: how I relate to mine is!

Much has been revealed in recent times. So much, indeed, and in light of what we now know, perhaps a responsible re-reading of the ancient scriptures is appropriate.

We cannot delude ourselves into salvation!

<http://www.juancole.com/2010/03/top-ten-reasons-east-jerusalem-does-not.html>



Baptismal font: 1380 AD

Holy Trinity Church, Hull UK

I attend a "*Christian*" church: the metaphor.

I am a nominal, and too often errant, "*Christian*" although I have undertaken the ritual initiations, baptized at Holy Trinity, Hull, UK: 1929: baptismal vows confirmed by the Bishop of Selby, St. Peter's School Chapel, York, UK: 1943. This is my spiritual heritage . . . I pray. I partake of the sacrament.

I have a Christian pedigree going back a long way. My ancestor, the Venerable Father John Kemble was canonized by Pope John Paul VI in 1970.

He was martyred in 1679, under the suspicion of being part of Titus Oates' Papist plot: he was not!

Before leaving for his execution he smoked a pipe and drank a cup of sack with the under-sheriff, this giving rise to the Herefordshire expressions "*Kemble pipe*", and

"*Kemble cup*", meaning a fare well, parting pipe and cup.

My great Uncle was Canon of Carlisle Cathedral.

The parishioners and clergy of "*my*" church are typical, unquestioning of dogma and generous when it suits them!

I am wisely cautious, maybe unnecessarily, to share my beliefs: the current rector is vulnerable to the usual human weakness of self-serving, ecclesiastical deviousness.

Introspection comes second though, to socializing, large meals and fundraising!

My digressions come thusly:

Let me start with a caveat: in all the thirteen Epistles of Paul, there is not one word about Christ's virgin birth. The Gospel according to Mark was written some one hundred and fifty years after Jesus' supposed demise: the synoptic quite later.

The apostles were unaware of the marvelous manner in which Jesus is said to have come into the world.

Having said that, I am aware! Love the God within and love your neighbour unconditionally, nevertheless, appeals to me greatly.

Yes, evil is very much a "Christian" concept and may only be exorcised by acceptance and forgiveness! The concept "evil" was foreign to indigenous people until "Christianity" imposed its presence.

In ancient Greek "*Christ*" translates as "*savior*" or "*messiah*." Accordingly I describe myself as nominal "Christian". Indeed, twenty-first century horror describes a racial and class divide incapable of saving anything.

To save is, indeed, beyond anyone's earthly capabilities, in metaphor or real time.

The Church of England, from whence I come, The Anglican Church of Canada, or, indeed, persons who call themselves "*Christians*" give me pause: institutionalized, the word, too often hides behind grace to excuse violence, simony and nepotism, yes, even today!

Anyway, it is unnecessary for me to be a "*Christian*", or indeed to take the scriptures literally, to understand the philosophies of Jesus of Nazareth.

My God is a pantheistic concept of being, as within nature. God is my personal conscience, a guiding inner compass. The compass, if I listen, relates me to the wonders of the Universe: to GAIA . . . earth.

This thing "*Christianity*" is loaded: no wonder many struggle with antidisestablishmentarianism! And, of course I am sure, if my parishioner colleagues knew of my thoughts they would be more than uncomfortable.

"*Christian*" readings, at worship, hoe a time worn furrow: Israelites, Moses and Joshua. The current contemporary people who call themselves Jews are, recent research shows, Khazars <http://renew.com/general89/notjws.htm> from central Asia: despite their penchant for self victimization, they are not Semitic!

Historically, it is, unlikely the Romans inflicted the Diaspora on them, or anyone, for indeed the original occupiers of Palestine, Judea, were simple Semite farmers: as indeed are the occupants of that land today.

Doubts have arisen that Moses led the Exodus. Contemporary biblical scholarship points, rather, to the Hyksos, Egypt had become over crowded, led by the Pharaoh Amenhotep II. They were about conquering and occupying, <http://www.gilad.co.uk/writings/the-old-testament-and-the-war-crime-in-gaza-by-gilad-atzmon.html> indeed stealing (sound familiar) the land of Canaan!

At the very mention of Israelites or Zion I cringe: a more criminal race of usurpers I know not. To utter those words from a compassionate pulpit is unconscionable! Contemporary Zionism continues the criminal rampaging of Moses and Joshua.

The Old Testament may be history: albeit distorted for the convenience of whatever "*Christian cult*" of the moment prevails. If an omnipotent God can be goaded, indeed suckered, by Satan's scheming, into ruining the life of Job, a decent man, and a gentile, then surely would not a sentient parishioner look askance at such a fable?

Indeed, if we read the Bible, particularly the Old Talmudic Testament, literally, we diminish the integrity of divine grace.

To perpetuate the "*chosen people*" myth is a willful and pusillanimous abdication. One has to assume the Dali Lama believes his people are chosen also, which indeed they are: by the CIA, the worldly purpose to harass China! We are all chosen people!

The Anglican Church of Canada faces revenue shortfall and diminishing attendance. Is there any wonder? Listening to gospel mythology raises concern for contemporary seminarians' education. The church would be much stronger if it were to shed the many implausible teachings and myths that are completely unnecessary in order to understand the historic figure, Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus of Nazareth was a good man, outstanding among many in his time, bucking oppression. He was the bastard son of Mary, an Aramaic speaking Galilean, and the Roman soldier Panthera. His native language was Aramaic!

Certainly not Jewish, Jesus was, nevertheless, born in the Judean village of Bethlehem because his family was obeying a census edict, and later in flight from Herod, the King of Galilee.

The dual legend, the virgin birth and the resurrection, is, to me, quite implausible.

The virgin birth is a construct, I believe, to defray prurient, out-dated, prejudice of archaic out-of-wedlock intolerance: myths that turn away, otherwise devotees, from his teaching of unconditional love.

A similar, later, construct was initiated by Bishop Zumárraga sanctifying Juan Diego's vision of *La Virgen Moranita en cerro Tepayac*.

As for the crucifixion: Pilate refused Caiphus' demand. Jesus was disruptive, not criminal. However, he was condemned, as a bastard for entering the Synagogue: Hebraic law decreed that to be a capital offence.

After the crucifixion Jesus lived on because his uncle, Joseph of Arimathea, saved him: hence the resurrection. Mary quite reasonably, saw Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane later. I contend, possibly this became legend as a means to strike awe in the minds of a simple populace. Are we still awe struck?

Legend describes Jesus as a common carpenter when, in fact, evidence shows him to be a sophisticated dissenter who learned well from his long sojourn in Alexandria. His formative years were spent there, a Cosmopolis of exciting intellectual exchange, where he was inspired by the teachings of Hillel.

Jesus preached, contrary to the prevailing ethos, (an ethos somewhat analogous to our own: war, corruption, self-loathing), a message of unconditional love. Jesus of Nazareth was a radical and a very brave man: that is from where his greatness sprung. Would that professed Christians, today, followed his example.

On this basis, for me, the story of Jesus is eminently plausible.

Without Paul, it is doubtful we would know him. Indeed, there may be many such persons today bucking convention, and like Jesus in his time, we are unaware of them.

Impressed by Paul's teachings, Emperor Constantine replaced, Mithraism, declaring Jesus "Rome's god of record". Then, at the Nicaea conference: 325 AD, he declared Jesus "The Son of God". The Bishops went along . . . We have a choice!

Jesus' message is still: love the God within and love your neighbour.

"There is no God higher than truth." Mahatma Gandhi. QED

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