

An Upside-Down Gospel

Like The Gospel, According to Mark.-ish

by Anonymish

Thus begins the proclamation of the Greatest News ever (*not Fake News!*), some people say maybe *of all time*¹. It's about Donald J. Trump and, you know, he *knows* great. All of his buildings are great. His hotels are great. Many people are telling me that *he's* the greatest - he's got the best words, the highest intelligence, a very big red hat and an even bigger red button - and a lot of folks, I hear, compare him to Ronald Reagan.

Who came out
from the ranches

of West Hollywood and declared, '*Make America Great Again.*'

Some time later, Ronald Reagan went to Washington², and there doubled down on his proposed policies and began talking about caring for mothers and their unborn babies, while simultaneously aggressively arming police in Black neighborhoods for an invented 'War on Drugs'³, further blending a stiff cocktail of white supremacy mixed with a toxic theology of *faux* christianity as the accepted cultural norm for white America's tastebuds, continuing in the

¹ Many early mss. do not include this phrase. Liberal scholars suggest it was added to keep 'in the tone' of the author-source *Anonymish*. New schools of thought have begun aggressive and deep archeological studies in the heart of America (which is a curious phrase) to find the *Original* (which we *know* exists because it is so stated in the United States Constitution and is therefore factual, and obviously accurate).

Ultimately, this is a matter of (mis)interpretation.

² Admittedly, *after* Mr. Smith

³ see Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow* or, ya know, just...*what happened*. The CIAs involvement in the distribution of crack-cocaine into 'poor, urban' neighborhoods is well-documented and a matter of historical fact and record. So too is our illicit and illegal involvement in the international narcotics industry. The US government is culpable (though, unsurprisingly, 'The Company' has not admitted these actions). .

It would be intellectually dishonest to not continue the logical course of this thought in the context of a seminary presentation, which begs the question - *What is the responsibility of followers of the Way of Jesus under an oppressive government; i.e. an Empire?*

Is it not to resist and stand in solidarity with the oppressed *by any means necessary?*

<crickets>

Collusion!?!? Nah, there's no collusion. PS, we're at the *intro*.

tradition of committing cultural genocide⁴ and ensuring that a particular theology would become policy⁵ in exchange for Block⁶ votes - a savvy political move for this non-political bad actor, sharing the keys of the kingdom with a *Moral Majority* of white evangelicals, who came to follow the patterns put in place by Jerry Falwell⁷.

Some time later in New York, it was Trump who proclaimed, '*Make America Great Again*.⁸' He spoke with *authority*! Unlike Sleepy Joe Biden or Low Energy Jeb⁹, *Your Favorite President* 'says it like it is,' which is refreshing to Americans who, since the good ole' days, have been bogged down by the enforced sensitivities of 'political correctness.' Everybody loves him. He's *Everybody's Favorite President*. He gets the best crowds, and our economy is strong and I've recently heard '*we have the strongest dollar in the history of our country*.¹⁰' <those words are in **RED** for a reason. Also, *we don't*. Homeboy lies.>

⁴ I owe this term to George Tinker, whose work *Missionary Conquest* lays out with incisiveness and honesty the unmistakable and utter confusion sixteenth thru nineteenth century missionaries held between 'gospel values' and white European cultural values resulting in the continuing genocide of indigenous people in the Americas 'unmatched in historical literature.' An equally compelling argument can (and should, and is) be(ing) made of the white American evangelical church's relationship with Black citizens, both past and present.

⁵ Follow this :: Theology —> Policy (which ultimately, by necessity) —> **Police** (this includes a society having a police force; the police *themselves* as citizens and members of a broader society; the *consequences* of an individuals' (and, by expansion, a collective *culture* and *consciousness*, as well as a collective *conscience*) *being* a member of the police force as their vocation (which includes the acts, as well as the result [for better or for worse and regardless of intent] of *police-ing* a society, community, and even individuals), and a *police presence* mandated to both 'serve and protect' the citizens as well as to maintain social order at the behest of those 'in charge,' as it were) In the same way, the roots of our inherited and accepted theologies ought and need to be critically examined - to make it RELEVANT, 'If the source of water is toxic, the body of water is not fit to swim in.'" - RJ, Rebecca Marie Jo

⁶ Block votes, not Black votes. In this case, one comes at the expense of the Other.

⁷ Jerry Falwell Sr., not Jr. He comes later. And so does this move of courting white evangelicals. But I digress.

⁸ Don't miss the subtleties. Mark 1:4 records John preached a baptism of *repentance* (μετάνοια meaning a 'change of mind' or perhaps better, *a change in thinking*). 'Some time later' (40 days in this case) Mark records Jesus as saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near, *repent* (μετανοεῖτε), and believe in the good news.' (v.15) It should go unstated this 'good news' is ironically along the continuum of the etymology of the same 'Evangelical' claimed by many Trump supporters today. Those interested in extra-curricular reading will find further thoughts from the author in this article, *Why One Cannot Follow Jesus and Support Trump*.

⁹ both seasoned politicians from the dominant two parties in American politics, in a way similar to the expertise expected (but in comparison to the teaching of Jesus found to be lacking) from the scribes of Mark's gospel (1:22)

¹⁰ Donald J. Trump, August 22, 2019 *Politifact*

[*this one time*¹¹] A reporter from Liberty University came to Trump. Well, he tried. He couldn't quite get there because it was a #MAGA rally and there were so many people waiting outside, for hours. They said they've never seen crowds like this before. The crowds were HUGE. They were coming from all over their great expansive country, the United States.

Anyway, the reporter-guy tries to get to Trump. He can't. Too big of a crowd, I'm telling you. He tweets at Fox News. He's now tweeting at Trump. Finally, somebody in the inner circle notices and is like, 'Hey *Mr. Everybody's Favorite President*, there's this leper-like-reporter-guy tweeting at you.' And Trump looks at the Twitter account and sees his friends, and how they Liked his tweets and goes, '*Tweeting is what I came for.*¹²' Tweets at the guy on the spot, because he wanted those RTs. Then Trump slides into the guys' DMs and is all, 'Don't tell anybody. Keep it a secret.' But Liberty Dude was like, '*Nah, Imma just tweet it.*' And he did.

And that's how Jerry Jr. and Trump became BFFs, and Trump got in the White House.

Some time later, very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Trump was up drinking Diet Cokes and eating Cheeseburgers - his ritual before 9 holes at Mar-A-Lago (that's his warm-up for a full 18, which comes later in the day after 'Executive Time'). He walked down to the buffet breakfast thingy - where all the commoners gather to be served by even more common folks - and he bumps into this old rich white lady. Because she was a woman, he moved on her like a Lion, but then she was like, 'Whoa, I only wanted to touch your *garment*,' and instead introduced him to her husband who happened to be enchanted¹³ by the essence¹⁴ of the

¹¹ Again, most early mss. do not contain this phrase. It's in brackets to fit a few of Mark's grammatical quirks into this upside-down Markish gospel. Note 'And a leper came to Jesus' in Mark 1:40, devoid (and even outside) of time, marking the ever-present historic present used by the author of Mark. Cheeky, but so is Mark. *ish*.

¹² see Mark 1:38

¹³ another word for 'possessed'

¹⁴ another word for 'spirit'

Armed Forces of the United States (specifically the Navy SEALs). This man was a military veteran, and he *really* liked BBQ pork. So Trump and he had some BBQ. For Breakfast. Just saying. They had business together.

Some time later, Trump invited the fella to the inauguration in Washington, DC, but he couldn't get there because - as you can imagine - the crowds were the largest crowds anybody had ever seen and Trump literally had to walk across the Lincoln Memorial's water to get to the platform to be sworn in. *It was unbelievable*. But anyway, the SEAL went back to Florida and told everybody about what Trump had done for him, with the pigs, on the golf course.¹⁵

Some time later Nancy Pelosi held a press conference. She and a number of other women had been watching and waiting from The Hill in the distance.

[abrupt ending, perhaps due to the ending being 'lost.' regardless, the conclusion of the Markish gospel by Anonymish is...

well, it's really up for grabs. Fill in the blank, as it were.]

(one expansion on course readings and rationale for the work) Burrige mentions a few characteristics of any ancient biography, reflected here at the intro to this Markish gospel. So too is the use of 'historic present', 'dropping into the vivid present tense when narrating a story

¹⁵ This *pericope* is, in some ways, parallel to the demoniac in Mark 5. The Global Bible Commentary states, '... Jesus' exorcism can be read as a politically symbolic action against severe exploitation...The reality of this exploitation becomes clearer when the demon replies, "My name is Legion; for we are many." (5:9). The name reveals the origin of the social, political, and economic oppression at the center of the story: the Roman Empire and its military might be stationed in the Decapolis. Usually a legion consists of two thousand to three thousand infantry, 120 calvary, and associated auxiliaries organized into numerous cohorts and squadrons. When the story says that the spirits request "Send us into the swine; let us enter them" (5:12) and that, when they did so, "the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and were drowned in the sea" (5:13), the story suggests that Mark chose the words *legion* and *swine* to mock the oppressing Romans.' Kinukawa, H., Patte, Daniel *et al.* *Global Bible Commentary* Abingdon Press, 2004. p. 369

in past time.¹⁶ Additionally, great care was taken to reflect the ‘poor Greek’ and ‘bad style’ of Mark’s stylistic critics of the past, while attempting to simultaneously reflect the complexities within the storytelling and prose of the author (e.g., the author of Mark’s linking of sections and ‘sandwiching’ and the *attempt* at reflecting such a literary device in the satirical connections between that account and this short, contemporary, contextualized *Markish faux* gospel regarding our modern day Caesar, Donald J. Trump - who, in a sacrilegious irony, is hailed as a Messiah-like figure to many from the white Evangelical tradition from which I come).

As Mark’s is the earliest gospel (and therefore, presumably, quite bold in its proclamations regarding Jesus) while being simultaneously situated within the context of the First Jewish-Roman war and the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, it must have been intentionally subversive to Caesar’s Empire in a way similar to satirical comedies such as SNL are today in their depictions of Donald Trump. BurrIDGE notes that ‘Like a good storyteller, [Mark’s author] grabs our attention through these fast-moving cameos - but subtly introduces many of his important themes, like a composer sketching out the major motifs for his symphony.¹⁷’ The ‘good news’ of Mark’s gospel is, of course, *upside-down* :: the Son of Man must suffer and die. In order for Jesus to rise from the dead, he first must die. This is the backwards logic of kingdom principles - the first shall be last and the last first, the emptying or decreasing of self in order to make room for the spirit of the Divine. It is that revolutionary and subversive gospel Mark seeks to reflect, and *in that Mark-ish style* I engaged in my own subversion.

I hope it makes sense.

¹⁶ BurrIDGE, R. *Four Gospels, One Jesus? A Symbolic Reading* Eerdmans, 2005. p.37

¹⁷ BurrIDGE, R. *Four Gospels, One Jesus? A Symbolic Reading* Eerdmans, 2005. p.39