

NOVUS VIA

CORVINUS

THYME

EAST IS EAST AND WEST IS WEST AND NEVER THE TWAIN SHALL MEET



Photo by Bob Karchmitt

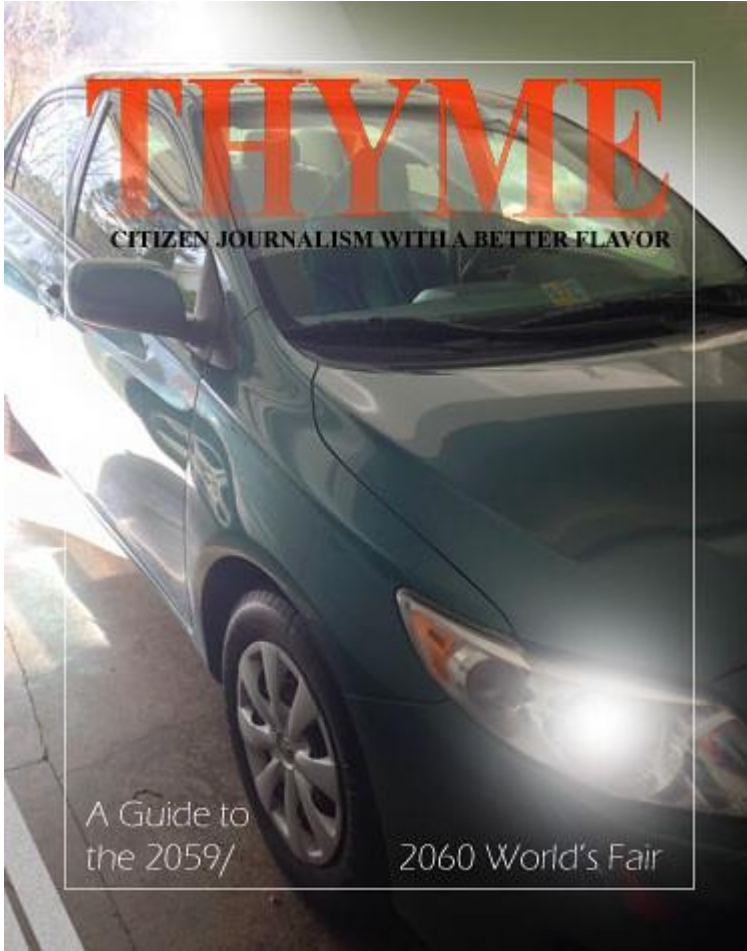
NOVUS VIA

A STORY OF THE MORE PERFECT WAY

A GUIDE TO THE 2059/2060 WORLD'S FAIR
THE LONG ROAD HOME
THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS



SPECIAL BOOK SECTION



A Guide to the 2059/2060 World's Fair

The Sequel to PONTIFUS

By Bob Kirchman

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Kate, Kris, Kris' daughter and Elizabeth Zimmerman had been

looking forward to this reunion for a long time. Their upcoming visit to the *Alaska Centennial Exhibition* in Fairgate was, they expressed among themselves, somewhat transparent as an excuse. But even with the new rapid speed evacuated tube trains running through Big Diomedes on the bridge, the luring of husbands to the ends of the earth required some doing. Kris and Elizabeth had an advantage here as Kris' husband was the pastor of the little church on Big Diomedes and Elizabeth's husband was still tied to the work of the great bridge he had engineered.

Elizabeth's Niece, the little girl who inspired Elizabeth's father to embrace life with renewed hope and courage, had by now succeeded him as chief engineer of the great bridge, but Martin O'Malley still kept regular office hours in Wales... mainly overseeing the apprenticeship of younger engineers in the manner of his deceased colleague, Rupert Zimmerman. It was a happy time. The great bridge and her economic vitality were indeed infusing something into the spirit of a hungry world. In centuries past it had been known as the 'Great Awakening.' Jonathan and Kris Greene had unwittingly followed in the footsteps of men like Jonathan Edwards. Indeed it almost seemed like the Divine's patience with mankind was finally paying off. The world in 2060 was a bit different than the prophets of doom had predicted.

There had indeed been wars, and even more rumors of war. The sins of mankind continued to play out on the world stage, and many suffered as a result. In the Northern hemisphere, Elizabeth Zimmerman's geothermal greenhouse farms, populated by refugees of these conflicts, offered a strong alternative! If the truth be known, more people around the world were discovering the 'hope and a future' that Rupert Zimmerman had first tasted over the Greene's macaroni and cheese! Though the news media was not reporting it. In

every nation of the world, little 'Priscilla and Aquilla' groups were quietly changing the world.

Indeed, on a lazy Summer afternoon in a garden on Big Diomedé, a group of ladies sharing sweet tea and sweet fellowship seemed to profess that all was right with the world. Yet, unlike the fat complacency of ages past, that had led to apathy and forgetfulness, they all shared that delicious feeling of anticipation! It was something like the feeling you have the day before your cherished daughter is given in marriage to a son-in-law who you yourself have come to love!

What could it be? The work in the world was far from finished, yet a new era of peace and prosperity seemed to be coming. With the world looking to the Northern Hemisphere for direction now, the Middle East was attempting to overcome her own convulsions with the establishment of the World Centre for Peace on the outskirts of Baghdad. The project of a young, charismatic visionary from Hungary, this could only help to settle the seemingly unending cycle of world violence...

But today, the light through the now mature trees of the biosphere was so... GOLDEN! so RICH! Not an ordinary day! And what was this? The MEN of these families were returning EARLY from their tour of 'Zimmerman's Folly.' That NEVER happened. The ladies had even put a later time on their reservations at Big Diomedé's Asian restaurant for dinner that night, knowing full well that a short tour of the great bridge never was. Yet, the men too seemed to sense the wonder of the sunlight... and the desire to be close to their loved ones. Think of Christmas morning or the day of your wedding... or the last bell before the first day of Summer vacation... none of these can come close to the feeling our little company now shared.

Golden sunlight seemed to fill the little garden now. The hollyhocks had never seemed so brilliant! Each member of the little company breathed it in. Kate wished she could share this moment with her youngest cousin, who was still traveling to join them. There was something special in this moment. The little company seemed to have never felt such wonder before; they ALL felt it... and then they were gone! The brilliant gardens of Big Diomedes were suddenly deserted!

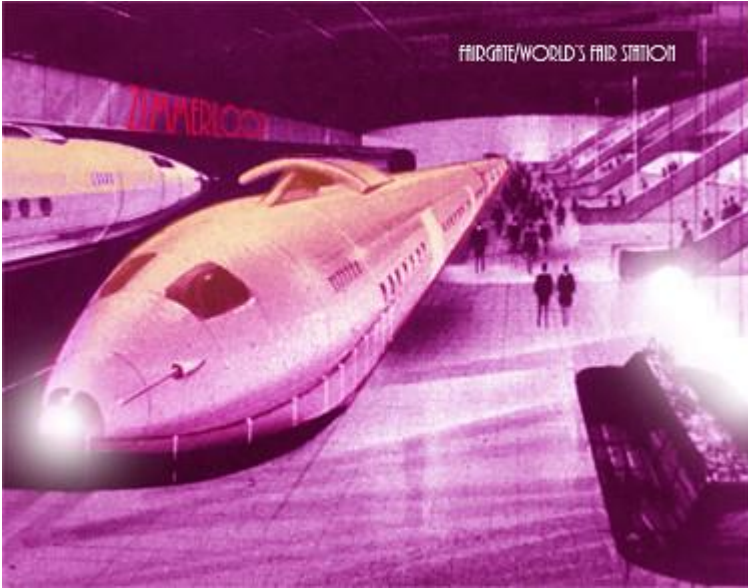
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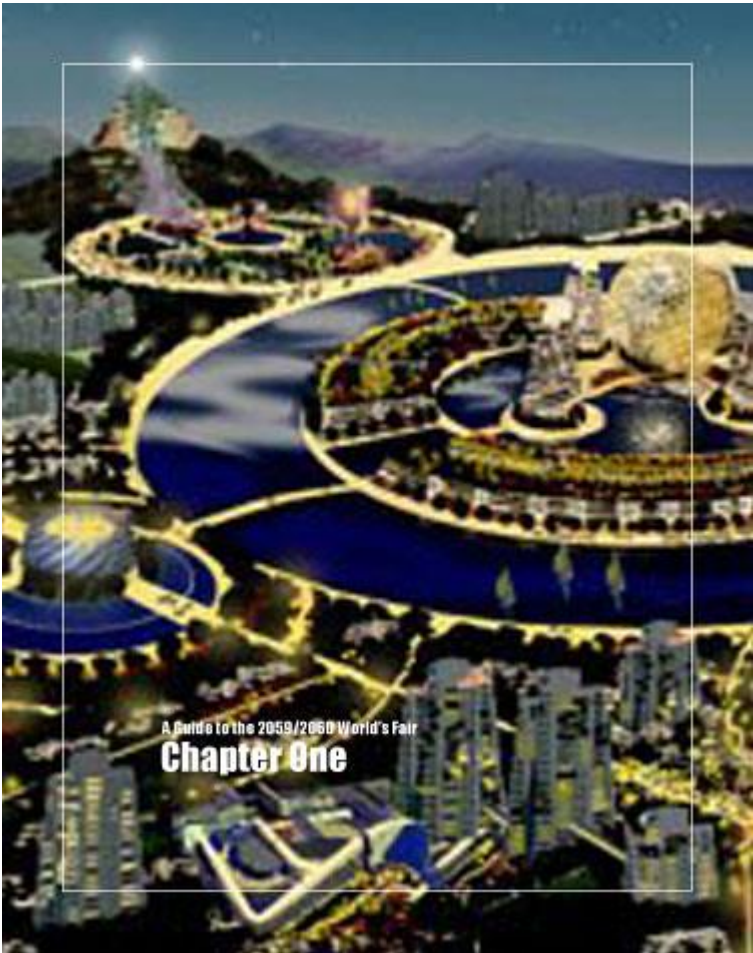


The Bering Strait Bridge Under the Northern Lights.



Lisburne Space Exploration Pavilion. Construction by A. Bowman.





A Guide to the 2059/2060 World's Fair
Chapter One





*The Pavilion of the **Bering Strait Bridge Corporation** at the 2059/2060 Alaska Centennial Exposition features the globe surrounded by the Plaza of Nations. Mural by Kristina Elaine Greer and Bob Kirehman.*

Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm." -- Sir Winston Churchill

The age of the great world's fair had been proclaimed over before, and yet here in the new Alaskan capital of Fairgate there stood a world of wonder to rival them all. The great fairs had had their beginning in the Nineteenth Century. They brought people together to see great wonders and inspired civic architecture with their gleaming classical edifices and grand reflecting pools. Rowdy Chicago was transformed through the vision of the 'White City' presented by the 1893 Columbian Exposition. St. Louis in 1904 also saw a grand vision for her future.

In Europe, France celebrated the Centennial of her bloody revolution by hosting the 1889 Exposition Universelle which featured as its centerpiece the famous Eiffel Tower. Though the critics heaped contempt on the bold design of Maurice Koechlin and Émile Nouguier, it eventually became the symbol of the city of Paris! Railroads brought the crowds to view wonders of the present world and visions for the world to come.

New York hosted two great fairs, one in 1939/1940 and another in 1964/1965. The two-season fairs ran afoul of the official sanctioning agency's policy of recognizing only one season for each exhibition, thus they were unrecognized by the agency; but they were great fairs. The 1939 fair presented a vision of the future to a Depression-weary America. Farm ladies in print dresses wandered past wondrous household appliances they would only see in their own homes after a horrible World War was over. The 'White City' was replaced by a Deco world not unlike the movie vision of the Emerald City in Oz. General Motors proudly presented 'Futurama,' a ride through the world as it would be in 1960!

The 1964/1965 World's Fair also produced visions of the future.

General Motors built a bigger and better 'Futurama' and showed visitors underwater hotels and cities on the Moon! It was heralded as the "last of the great world's fairs." Indeed it ushered in innovations in communication and technology that would soon bring the world to people in the remotest of places. A New York Times article went so far as to say that the New York World's Fair sealed the fate of future fairs. To be sure, there were more great fairs, but by the beginning of the 21st Century the world was coming to you via your little screen! Air travel became more stressful in those years and people pretty much had seen everything that was going to be exhibited on their iPhones anyway.

Alaska had actually hosted another 'Centennial Exposition' in 1967 to celebrate 100 years passing since the purchase from Russia in 1867. It was somewhat small and had been overshadowed by Expo '67 in Montreal, Canada. Both the Montreal fair and the Fairbanks fair had featured geodesic domes... a forerunner of the biospheres that would cover her communities in another century. At the time it indeed seemed as though technology had rendered the institution of 'World's Fairs' obsolete. They had progressed from grand 'White Cities' that had inspired true civic renewal to brash conglomerations of competing iconic structures that, while fascinating, were not exactly structures you wanted to copy in remaking your community.

The Bering Strait Bridge was completed in the 21st Century and the world seemed smaller again. Evacuated tube trains made extremely long distance travel fun again as they could literally whisk you to the other side of the world in a matter of hours. In the years following the Alaska Revolution, there seemed to be a newfound optimism and people were ready to visit the great fairs again. Since Alaska still

considered it's 'birth' to be in 1959, a Centennial Exposition was planned. Martin O'Malley became the Director of the Fair Corporation mainly as a means of keeping busy while staying out of the hair of his niece, who now ran the bridge. In his nineties, his job consisted mainly of looking at renderings of proposed fair buildings, but that he found quite interesting enough.

And so the stage was set for what could certainly be considered one of the 'great' world's fairs. The infrastructure was there to bring people from the four corners of the earth!, and come they did!

(to be continued)



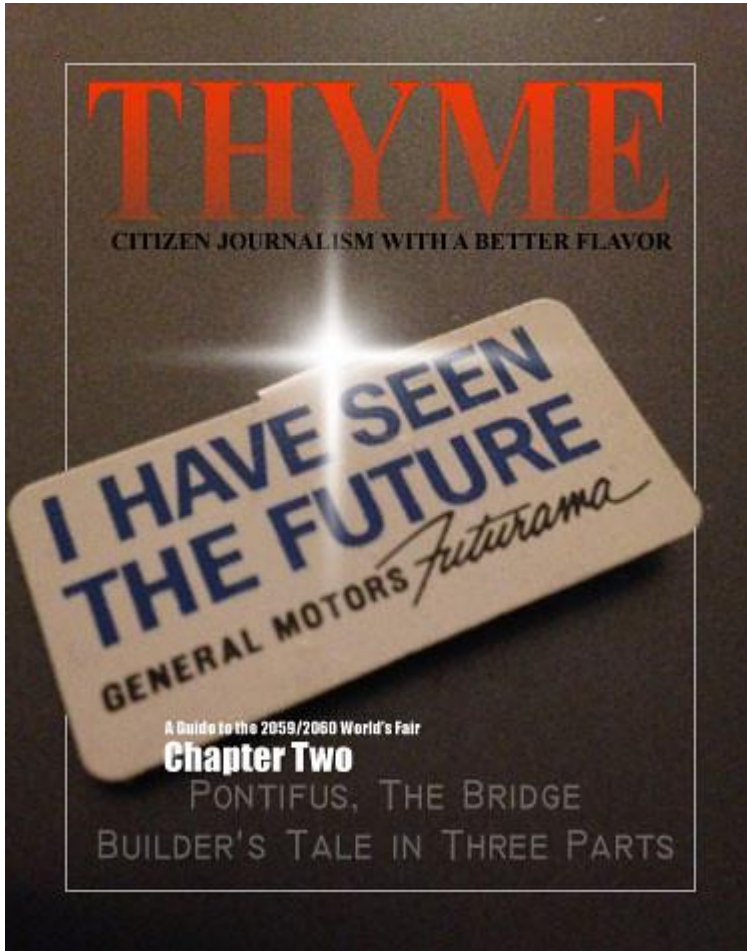
The Alaska Pavilion at the 2059/2060 Centennial Exposition in Fairgate. Fairgate is the new Capital City that was constructed near Fairbanks.



*The **Galaxy Experience Project**, the world's largest physical model of the **Milky Way Galaxy**, is suspended above a reflecting pool at the 2059/2060 Alaska Centennial Exposition. Visitors ride glass elevators through the model to an observation deck and a revolving restaurant.*



The 2059/2060 Alaska Centennial Exposition.[1.]



For me, reason is the natural organ of truth; but imagination is the organ of meaning. Imagination, producing new metaphors or revivifying old, is not the cause of truth, but its condition.” -- C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

His friends called him "Digory," a reference to "the Professor" in C.

S. Lewis' novels, for Joe Kirke was indeed prone to spend time in his books. His friends Fred and Charles found him to be a great asset in rounding out their crew for adventures... and the three young men LOVED adventures! Their latest was the "Five Continent Challenge," where they would drive on every large continent of the world in one road trip! They had just forayed into Egypt across the Sinai and were making their way back as Joe was planning to join his older cousin Kate, Kate's husband, and her friends on a trip to the World's Fair in Alaska.

Kate had scolded him: "Don't be late!" as he Skyped her from Cairo.

She was not so much worried about his resolve as the road-worthiness of the van the three companions had dubbed: "Evelyn," a reference to a movie they had seen where a girl joins a road trip to find her birth parents. In the movie, "Evelyn" finds herself mired in beach sand and Kate still had her doubts about the three friends' journey up the "Road of Bones" as the Lena Highway was called. The road was originally built by gulag prisoners and when they died, the story goes, their bones became part of the roadbed. In any case, Kate inwardly wished her cousin and his friends safely back on Big Diomedea.

So far, the most impressive sight the young men had beheld was that of the stone towers of Lena Pillars National Park near Yakutsk in the Russian Federation. "Sort of like Natural Chimneys on steroids," Joe had exclaimed upon seeing the giant formation. Indeed the stone towers of Augusta County, Virginia seemed small in comparison. Also impressive was the sheer magnitude of open country one passed through on a motor trip through Asia. The three found genuine respect for the professional drivers who traveled this hard road, especially when 'Evelyn' experienced a broken belt. One of these 'Road Knights' pulled up behind the steaming van following the unwritten code of the wilderness highway. The driver rolled out a new

belt stretched from a spool of all-purpose tape and after the repair was tested, put the kettle on his portable stove and the men shared tea!

One could hardly call what they shared conversation, for the Mongolian driver spoke no English and seemed to the three as if he were a likely descendant of Genghis Khan... at least that was how the story wrote itself in their minds. The young men imagined him living in a ger and drinking copious quantities of mare's milk, to be sure. He seemed friendly in a fierce sort of way and communicated quite well with hand gestures punctuated regularly by his toothless smile. Kate was right to prod her cousin. The endless highway created a sense of eternal plodding. The young men found this intriguing, especially compared to the panicked pace of school... partying, panicked study and sweating exams all seemed so exaggerated in pace and importance compared to motoring endless and unchanging roads. The return trip offered more of the same. The three friends were actually enjoying the pace of earlier times!

They seemed excited enough about the fair. Indeed there would be interesting exhibits. "Nations of the North" told the stories of Alaska's indigenous peoples, now recognized as Nations within the Republic. The Israelis had unveiled a slew of new technologies that one had to see in person to really appreciate. The men were awestruck at the magnitude of the spectacle that awaited them, but hid it behind jokes about the "cheesy" Rupert Zimmerman Museum. "You know, it has his car in it!" Fred remarked. "A man's car does not lie about him!" The young men all attended Liberty University in Virginia where there was a Jerry Falwell museum. The museum had Falwell's Father's Model T on display. In the exhibit, two mannequins, one representing the elder Falwell, are stuffing booze into the car. You have to remember that this is a Baptist University!



The young men often retreated to the roof of their dormitory to plan their adventures, having hacked the security code for the roof door.



Fueling a Lada on the Amur Highway.

The elder Falwell, a Lynchburg businessman, had been a bootlegger and had even shot his brother in an altercation, not exactly the kind of thing one wanted remembered in his personal museum, but family

history is family history. Zimmerman, after he lost everything one time, bought the sedan and drove it as he rebuilt his interests. When the great bridge was completed, Zimmerman led the procession across the span driving the Toyota. He chose the faithful ride over his classic Porsche, remarking that the President of Russia had opened the Amur Highway driving a yellow Lada. The Russian President had himself driven everything from Formula 1 cars to tanks, but for the opening chose to drive a car his people could identify with.

Zimmerman's story was at least as complex, but since his daughter Elizabeth was the force behind it it mainly focused on how he came to be inspired to build great works. The burning of his tent was truthfully presented along with his ruthless past. The night he witnessed the first accident on the bridge and the death of a trucker was told as well. "Zimmerman was a tough old curmudgeon," Fred continued. "Didn't he fight in the war and get shot and all that?" Joe nodded. His Grandfather had actually met the man, and told a different story though. Joe, for his part, wanted to remain in the companionship of bravado and didn't correct him.

Now the trio had come to Taba, where one leaves Egypt and enters Israel. Here things began to go badly. The men had left Israel without a multiple-entry visa and were now improperly documented! A trip to a consulate might be required to fix things and that would put them behind schedule. Charles decided to haggle with the border official... a bad choice as it put them in a sort of 'penalty box' as far as entering the country or retreating to Cairo. Eventually the young men were turned back. they had lost much of the day and decided to check in to a motor hotel on the Sinai road. There they had a fitful night. In the wee hours of the morning, Fred noticed that "Digory," or JOE an we should call him, was nowhere to be found.

Assuming he had taken a stroll to unwind, the men resumed their attempt to sleep but by morning it was clear that something was amiss. Several Egyptians were in agitated conversation outside their window. The two remaining men switched on BBC news and were stunned at what they heard. Large numbers of people had simply vanished! Early reports had this happening around the globe. Some world leaders were not accounted for and the TV anchors fished for explanations. The most repeated was "space aliens' had likely abducted them. There was an eerie quality to the disappearances that made this all too plausible.

Major Metropolitan areas were under curfews, the report said.

Transportation was at a standstill. Border stations were unmanned. Fred looked at Charles. Charles looked at Fred. Their unspoken: "Let's do it" echoed silently in both of their minds. They grabbed their gear and Joe's too. "He's got to be somewhere around here!" exclaimed Fred. Now's our chance! In their fear the two loaded the van and sped out into the morning light, hoping to find Joe before it was too late. An armored car was rolling into town. The men panicked, heading for the uncrossable border. There was one old Arab man at the booth. He was alone and clearly felt quite overwhelmed. Fred flashed a visa stamp... not the correct one, mind you, but the poor man in the booth waved him through.

What do we do now?" Fred moaned. The only obvious thing to do was wait around near the checkpoint and hope for 'Digory's' return. Both men felt that was pretty unlikely though, given the fact that so many people were unaccounted for. "We probably won't get much help from the authorities, will we?" But there was no time to mull the situation over as presently a large contingent of Israeli Defense Force troops appeared, announcing that the border was sealed. Israel was at

war!

Recognizing the two as hapless American tourists, the IDF took them into protective custody and escorted them and their van into the country. They were taken to a military compound and sternly warned that they must stay there: "...until things are secure again." "We'll let you know if we find your friend, but it is not too likely," a tough man in fatigues told them. Joe's cell phone was among the items in his luggage and Fred felt he should call Joe's older cousin on it to let her know what was happening. The phone rang through to the voicemail, which the robo-voice said was full. Fred tried some general numbers for Big Diomedes, but there was nothing. Even the BSB Information Centre yielded an endless busy signal.

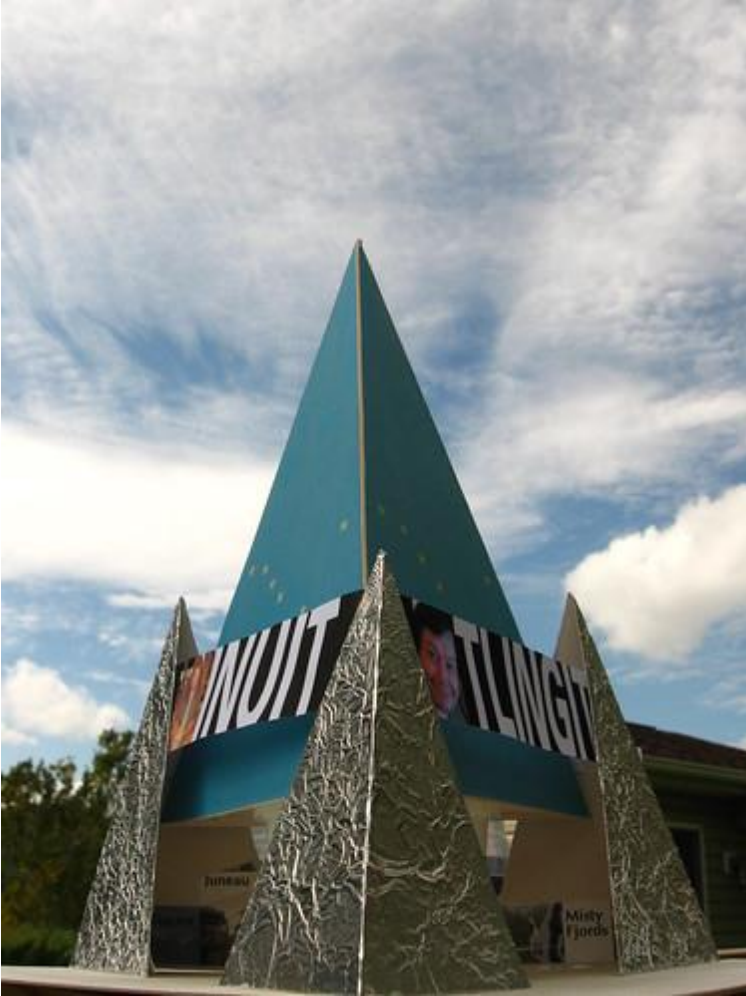
Fred thought to himself: "This is so beyond unreal! There is NO WAY to get in touch with anyone! Then he remembered that Joe, though he seldom mentioned it, did know how to pray. "I wonder if the Divine would hear me?" thought Fred, and he continued by addressing that unknown Divine, pleading quietly out of the deep needs he felt in his own heart. Somehow he felt the urge to rummage in Joe's duffle and he found a well-worn Bible alongside of a little book titled: *"Notes to Priscilla and Aquilla."* Fred dismissed the Bible, indeed his schoolmasters had assured him repeatedly that there was no truth to be found there. The government school teachers had told him it was a book of myths, the Bible School professors had underscored this sentiment with their arbitrary proclamation that everything BUT this is false. Fred was not particularly in the mood for another theological discourse, but he picked up the second volume. It was skinnier and that he found that both reassuring and non-threatening. He began to read. The volume was well-worn and Joe, in an earlier time in his life, had marked it quite a bit. Joe's handwritten notes in the margins introduced Fred to a deeper side of his friend.

Here was a side that to be quite honest, Joe had concealed from his traveling companions. The book promised to show its readers "a more excellent way." Fred needed a reality better than his present one, so he read on.

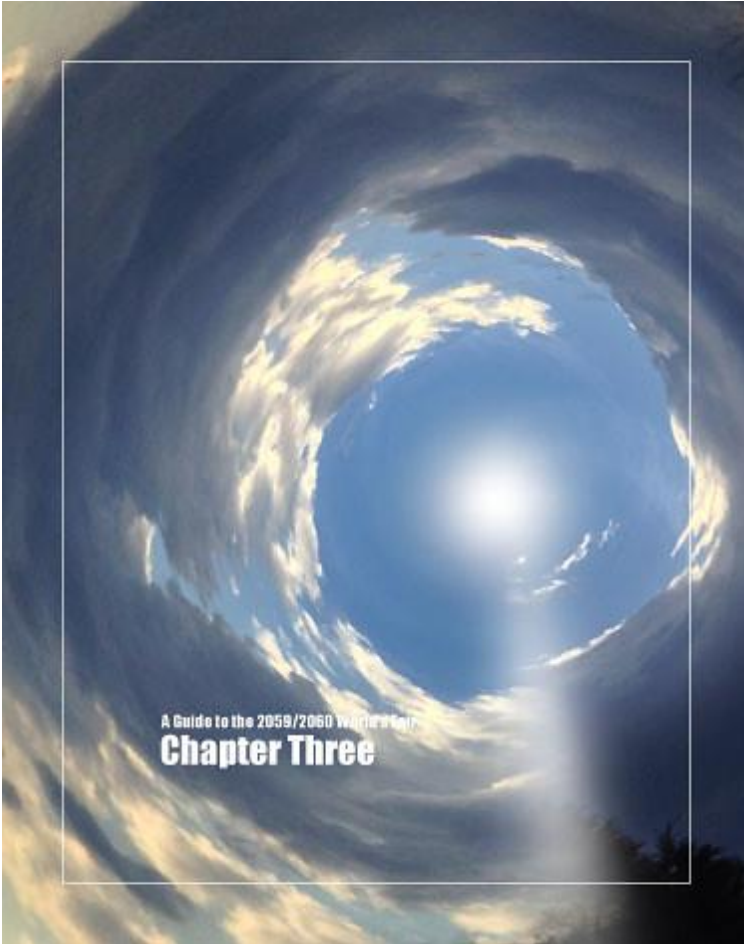
Military custody in Southern Israel is not all that bad. The chefs are Kosher and since every young person is required to serve, the military culture is, shall we say, 'broader' than that of many countries. The accommodations were simple but clean. Fred and Charles found a lounge where they could catch up on the news on TV. Here they grasped the magnitude of the situation they had fallen into. Normally the whole drive would have taken a long day from Cairo to Amann, but now it had stretched to two days and the sealing of the borders made it impossible to continue. Even if Joe somehow materialized at that moment, there would be no easy drive across the Jordan River Crossing.



The Pavilion of the Cherokee and Monacan Nations at the Fairgate World's Fair. Since America's original nations are recognized in Alaska's Republic, many were represented at the fair by specific pavilions. The pavilion is modeled after a typical house of the Eastern people.



'Nations of the North' is a popular exhibit.



I will bless those who bless you,
*and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”*
-- Genesis 12:3

Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all
nations on earth will be blessed through him.” -- Genesis 18:18

Fred devoured the news with great interest. One thing was clear in all of the reports, how *ORDERLY* the disappearance of *MILLIONS* of people had been. Though people piloting planes and driving buses had indeed been among the suddenly missing, it was amazing that there was always a statement like: "The bus just coasted to the side of the road," or the admission: "I wasn't supposed to fly that day, but I had to switch assignments at the last minute. All of the rest of the crew simply *VANISHED!*" Fred thought of his devout Mother, who possessed a whole series of novels about the 'Rapture' of the church. All of them had the disappearances create untold havoc. The striking fact about whatever this was was that there wasn't any widespread havoc. The pain of lost loved ones and leaving notes on public walls was heart wrenching enough. Perhaps the eerie quiet of the disappearances made it more so.

A number of world leaders were gone, including the Prime Minister of Israel. Reports came in that suggested whole regions in the extreme Northern Hemisphere were now uninhabited! The great bridge between continents had suffered the loss of most of its operating personnel and was closed to all but emergency travel. Fred and Charles noted that the world was now missing so many people just younger than them. There were no children... no babies. Was this, as the CNN commentators droned on, the work of space aliens, or was it Divine? Fred continued to ponder... but more and more, he was expressing his concerns to a Divine he had dismissed up to a few days ago.

If Faith was something you could be Inoculated against, Fred seemed to have been well protected by exposure to the dead form of the 'pathogen.' By the time he was given the choice of 'Christian'

college or the military by his parents, he had pretty much aligned himself with those who could maintain an outward appearance while living as they wished. 'Christian' University provided plenty of companions with similar bents. You just had to remember to cover your breath.

Charles was cast in the same mold. He and Fred had met at Freshman orientation and had become fast friends. Joe arrived among them, somewhat disillusioned as he failed to live up to the 'perfection' he felt was expected of him. Inwardly he still wrestled with the tension between expectations and reality. When the three men sought adventure, he was the one who planned for contingencies. Though the other two chided him for his 'overthinking,' they were also quite happy to have his mature presence in their group. More than a few times, Joe's steady hand had kept them from disaster. Now the remaining two sorely missed him.

All three of the young men had found Israel to be wonderful. Israeli innovation was indeed fulfilling, it seemed, the prophecies given to Abraham. That is that through his posterity all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Israel was a bountiful and happy place to be, contrasting sharply with the unrest that surrounded her.



The Siberia Republic Pavilion.



He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide
under the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in
him will I trust.

Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;

Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

Athousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.

Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;

There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.

He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation."

-- Psalm 91

But now Israel was at war. The modern nation of Israel had been born in 1948. Almost immediately the nations surrounding her attacked on all fronts. Miraculously, the small nation the size of New Jersey had survived. Again, in 1967, Israel was attacked by her neighbors. That war ended with her in possession of Judea, Samaria and the Sinai! But now enemies like Iran threatened to fire warheads into Israel. Seeking to take advantage of world chaos, the nations

again rose up against the small country.

Missiles were in the air, a young woman officer informed her 'guests' as she escorted them to an underground bunker. "The 'Iron Dome' has been activated, but this is a full attack. Iranian ICBMs are on their way as I speak." Fred and Charles were unable to speak, but followed their guide down a long hallway to a windowless room with bunks in it. Had the two travelers been allowed to see a map of troop positions, they would have seen a massing for invasion from Syria, Jordan and Sinai.

So this is what fear tastes like," thought Charles. Fred pulled out the *Notes to Priscilla and Aquilla* book and spent the time in the shelter by delving into it. Charles' derisive remarks did not phase him. Death was a very real possibility as this little bunker was no match for what was likely headed their way. Was Israel launching a counter-attack?, they wondered aloud, but their tight-lipped handler said nothing. Indeed there were intense shaking and rumblings that rocked the shelter. For over a day and night they stayed there.

And then it was over. Their guide knocked on their door and announced that it was safe to come out of the bunker. She introduced herself as 'Sarah,' and said: "Come see what the Divine has done!"

The bright light of the desert sun blinded them as they surfaced. They made their way to the dining hall as Sarah explained that the missiles launched at her country had been stopped! 'Iron Dome' is good, but not good enough, to explain the survival of our people this day! All of our major cities stand unscathed!, as if they were covered by the wings of the Almighty! I am not one who has lived in fear of the

Lord, I must confess, but I have no other explanation for it!"

Our enemies have not fared so well, as we indeed launched the counter-attack I was not at liberty to tell you about. Their is, I fear, much death and destruction in the lands that surround us. This was necessary to deter what our commanders felt would be a wave of attacks and we are grieved by this development, you must know." Indeed the 2060 war was at least as miraculous at the others had been. But Sarah was only telling the part of the story she knew. As she spoke, a new wind from the East was pushing away the fallout.



S*ocialism is a philosophy of failure, the creed of ignorance, and the gospel of envy, its inherent virtue is the equal sharing of misery." -- Sir Winston Churchill*

T*he process which, if not checked, will abolish Man goes on apace among Communists and Democrats no less than among Fascists.*

The methods may (at first) differ in brutality. But many a mild-eyed scientist in pince-nez, many a popular dramatist, many an amateur philosopher in our midst, means in the long run just the same as the Nazi rulers of Germany. Traditional values are to be 'debunked' and mankind to be cut out into some fresh shape at the will (which must, by hypothesis, be an arbitrary will) of some few lucky people in one lucky generation which has learned how to do it." -- Reverend John Richardson [1]

Mátyás Corvinus was not happy. He had evacuated himself and his staff from the Centre for World Peace as the Israeli war began. 1,582 miles away in Moscow, he was surprised at the turn of events that had transpired. Baghdad was now occupied by Israeli forces. Israel had indeed taken this latest aggression by her neighbors as a 'last straw,' and moved quickly and decisively to expand to more defensible borders. Clearly he would have to address the world about this 'intolerable aggression,' but he had an immediate and embarrassing problem: He was suddenly in need of a capital.

As more information on the disappearances came to his attention, he found a solution. The Northern Hemisphere seemed to have lost most of her population. Here was a wonderful fairgrounds with state-of-the art translation technology, broadcast capability and plenty of room for his emergency command centre! For some reason there were very few people left in the Alaska and Siberia Republics. Securing the great bridge would be another extremely valid reason for this move. The remaining leaders of the world would be summoned into emergency session at the Fairgate Hall of Representation. The situation required leadership. It was time for Corvinus to make his move!

Ladies and gentlemen," Corvinus began; *"The events of the past few days have turned our world upside-down. Most of us have friends or loved ones who have not been located. My condolences go out to you. The efforts of my staff to find them will be relentless. We are trying to learn exactly how Billions of people seem to have vanished."*

By now you have heard the theories put forth on TV. Let me restate what IS clear at this point. It is premature to assign responsibility to 'space aliens' or some 'act of G-d,' but it IS clear that this involves some plot or energy of immense proportions. It would seem that there is a pattern, as whoever has done this has taken from us the flower of our youth, along with that there are those who might be considered spiritual people, but there is some concentration to this pattern that must be noted as well. Of the ADULTS who have been taken, it seems a common thread that they were under the influence of such writings as the 'Priscilla and Aquilla Guides,' such as the one I am holding. It is used along with the old texts to infuse the reader with the sense that the Divine will actually speak into and redeem their lives! I cannot emphasize enough how DANGEROUS this is!

As you know, there is great danger in assigning value to things outside one's subjective judgement. 'Absolute Truths' create hateful fanatics who might seek to eliminate those whom they find outside of their narrow realities. We at the Centre for World Peace have always stood for tolerance and diversity, knowing that there are many equally valid statements of 'truth.' Acceptance of one another requires that we lay aside such harmful notions such as believing that G-d, family and country are worth dying for.

The world is in great need of healing right now. It need decisive

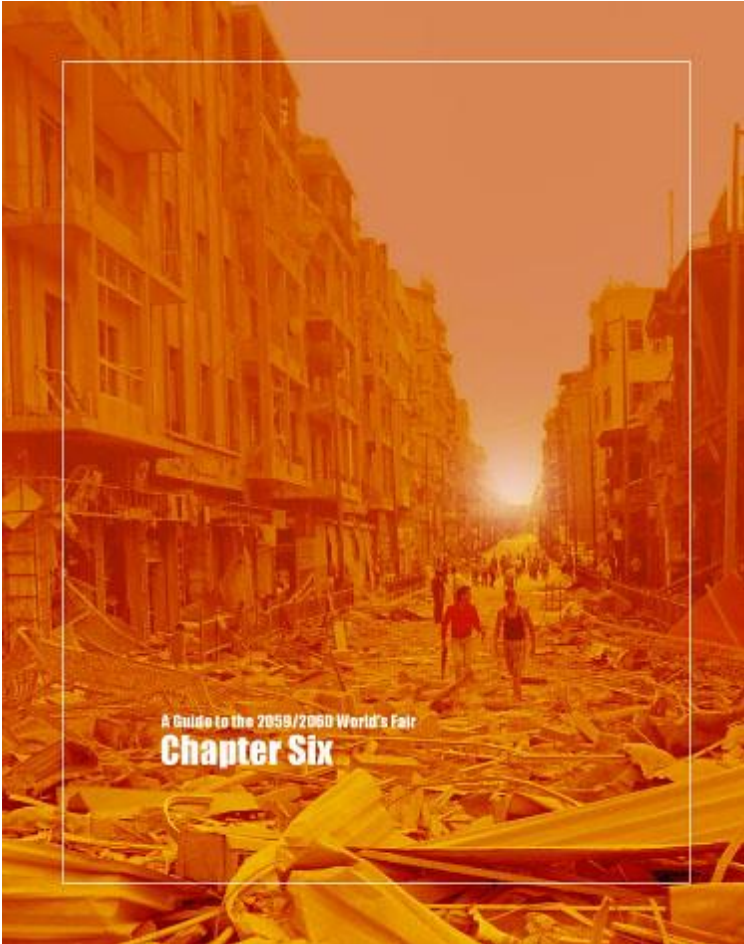
leadership. To that end I have gathered with the remaining leaders of the world. They agree with me that it is time to bring humanity together... it is time for WORLDSTATE! Worldstate will bring an end to war and inequity. Worldstate will mean humanity will finally step into its Golden Age! But it will require sacrifice. We must give up our claims to individual and national sovereignty as well as the notion that protecting our own flesh and blood is a noble thing! The State requires our allegiance if it is to become the source which supplies our needs.

Worldstate can and will provide equally for all. The great Progressive experiments of the past failed, not because they were not worthy and good, but because they were diverted by evil men or thwarted by opposition. They were simply not big enough to overcome this and so they fell. Today's Worldstate is too big to fail. Worldstate will have the momentum to usher in a bright new era of hope and change."

And so the world came to the World's Fair. Mátyás Corvinus was ready to redistribute the ill-gotten treasure of the North-lands with the people of the world. But he had to eliminate any opposition that remained in order to do so.



The entrance to the Fairgate Hall of Representation.



He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.”

-- Daniel 7:25

Explain THIS!" said the surly border agent on the Siberia Highway.

He held up the well-worn copy of *Notes to Priscilla and Aquilla*, now much annotated by Fred and the Bible that accompanied it. A routine inspection at an A2 checkpoint was going sour as the two travelers had been chosen for a 'random' inspection and agents were opening their duffles. Charles watched in horror as his companion was wrestled into cuffs, but he never stopped thinking. As the scuffle ensued, the young man quietly picked up the book and slid it when the agents were not looking into the springs of the van's driver's seat. He knew he was taking a risk by hiding evidence, but somehow he felt that might help his friend.

The agents announced that Fred was being detained indefinitely and that Charles could be detained as well... or simply move along. Charles panicked. Surely the rumors were just rumors... the ones about beheadings, he thought, but the Middle-Eastern men who suddenly had been elevated to law-enforcement positions by WORLDSTATE seemed quite capable of dispensing 'instant judgement' if they wanted to. Certain 'Religious' books had been linked to the disappearance or abduction of billions of people and possession of them was cause for detention. A dusty Bible on a shelf was no cause for concern... as it was simply a 'Cultural Artifact,' but if it was well-worn and marked, and accompanied by other texts suggesting its application in one's life it suggested a lack of respect for Worldstate's important work in preserving order.

It had been several months since the disappearances, the war and the ascension of Mátyás Corvinus to world leadership. Roads had been reopened and it was time for Fred and Charles to go home. Fred's family had been among the missing but Charles still had an Aunt in Virginia and so the young men decided it was time to go home. They were about out of funds anyway. The great fair no longer had any attraction for them. Big Diomedes now held no friends and family,

but they still had to pass through it on their way. Now Charles had a bitter decision to make. The agents decided to make it simple for him. Detaining him at gunpoint by the van, they escorted Fred around the checkpoint building. The next thing Charles heard was his friend's screams, followed by a deep 'thud.' Presently an agent rounded the building with a bloody axe. Charles was again given his options. Shaking, he repacked the van.

Mátyás Corvinus was speaking on the radio as he started the van: *"Citizens of WORLDSTATE, it is quite clear today that there are pockets of resistance to our important work of returning the world to stability and prosperity. No doubt, the Zionist state is largely to blame, but there is a deeper 'homegrown' terrorist element who claim allegiance to a power somehow 'higher' than worldstate. They are most dangerous to our work of restoring peace to the world. We are compelled to use every means at our disposal to stop them."*

Corvinus smiled. Indeed it was a stroke of genius to have enfolded the most vile of terrorists as 'enforcers' in the new world order. Somehow Corvinus' smooth dialogue had convinced them that he indeed would help usher in the new world order THEY sought. In any case, a certain amount of chaos and fear served them both, terrorist and would-be leader of the world. But chaos must not be allowed to run unchecked for too long. A new refocusing must take place before Corvinus' TRUE work could be done. People's hearts and allegiances were still focused in too many places. A new world order required mankind to adopt a singular focus for their devotion, yea even their WORSHIP! Mátyás Corvinus gazed into his mirror... and he smiled.



The Siberia Highway in Winter.



***A**nd a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of G-d more perfectly." -- Acts 18:24-26*

Charles fingered the book thoughtfully. This "Way" had inspired Fred to die for something... not a coerced death or a whipped up entering into the ways of a mob, but a reasoned decision that something was more precious to him than life itself! The *Notes to Priscilla and Aquilla* guides were indeed considered dangerous and subversive. Fred had surely paid the price for possessing one, but here it was. Charles was alone with the volume and though he believed it was dangerous, his curiosity gnawed at him. "Surely I am strong enough to resist blatant fallacy!" he reasoned. He knew he should turn the volume in to be burned... but he was alone.

The knowledge that Fred had found something larger here drew him onward. "What, pray tell, was this 'More Perfect Way?'" Surely the Worldstate had a way more perfect than any profession of dogma... and if so, what was the contrasting thought that would help him recognize it? Trembling, he opened the little book.

The Seven Gifts of the Spirit, the book began. They were found in the old books of the Prophets:

The Gifts of the Spirit

*But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him: A spirit of **wisdom** and of **understanding**, A spirit of **counsel** and of **strength**, A spirit of **knowledge** and of **fear of the LORD** (piety), And his delight shall be the **fear of the LORD**."*

-- Isaiah 11:2,3a

W*isdom:* It is the capacity to love spiritual things more than material ones;

U*nderstanding:* In understanding, we comprehend how we need to live as followers of Christ. A person with understanding is not confused by the conflicting messages in our culture about the right way to live. The gift of understanding perfects a person's speculative reason in the apprehension of truth. It is the gift whereby self-evident principles are known;

C*ounsel (right judgement):* With the gift of counsel/right judgment, we know the difference between right and wrong, and we choose to do what is right. A person with right judgment avoids sin and lives out the values taught by Jesus;

F*ortitude (courage):* With the gift of fortitude/courage, we overcome our fear and are willing to take risks as a follower of Jesus Christ. A person with courage is willing to stand up for what is right in the sight of G-d, even if it means accepting rejection, verbal abuse, or physical harm. The gift of courage allows people the firmness of mind that is required both in doing good and in enduring evil;

K*nowledge:* With the gift of knowledge, we understand the meaning of G-d. The gift of knowledge is more than an accumulation of facts, it also helps us to choose the right path through life;

P*iet***y (reverence):** *With the gift of piety/reverence, we have a deep sense of respect for G-d and the Church. A person with reverence recognizes our total reliance on G-d and comes before G-d with humility, trust, and love. Piety is the gift whereby, at the Holy Spirit's instigation, we pay worship and duty to G-d as our Father, Aquinas writes;*

F*ear of the Lord (wonder and awe):* *With the gift of fear of the Lord/wonder and awe, we are aware of the glory and majesty of G-d. A person with wonder and awe knows that G-d is the perfection of all we desire: perfect knowledge, perfect goodness, perfect power, and perfect love. This gift is described by Aquinas as a fear of separating oneself from G-d. He describes the gift as a "filial fear," like a child's fear of offending his father, rather than a "servile fear," that is, a fear of punishment. Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."*

The source of the traditional names of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The Septuagint and the Vulgate read “*piety*” for “*fear of the Lord*” in its first occurrence, thus listing seven gifts.”

Charles read eagerly. In Galatians 5, there were also 'Fruits' of that same Spirit:

B*ut the fruit of the Spirit*

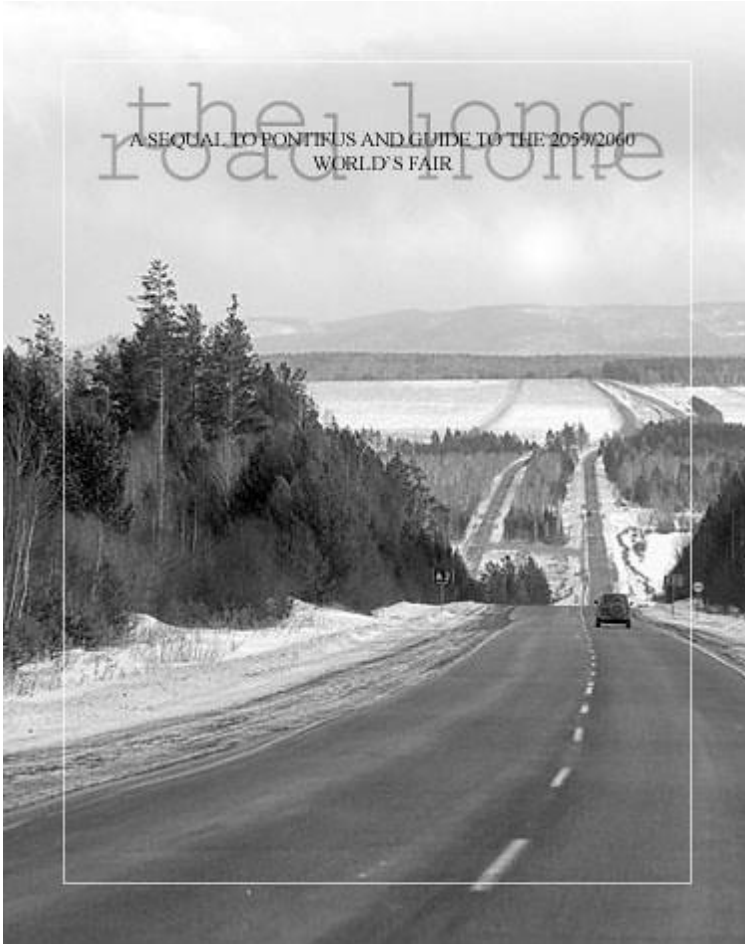
is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

But these were somehow 'subversive' and illegal? It seemed to Charles that any society propelled by such virtues would be a happy one indeed! Locking the door to his room, he read on. Sometime in the dawning hours of morning, he got to the handwritten notes in the end. The notes spoke of a dialogue with the Divine, there was a peace to be found there... unlike the heavy peace under the hand of Worldstate. "There is freedom here!" thought Charles. "It is a freedom created by timeless principles that guide the one who possesses them, not a peace imposed by oversight... unless one saw that reverence for the Divine was stronger than mere human oversight.

Charles carefully wrapped the little book in his clothes and secured it in his luggage. For now the promise seemed greater than the life he now lived. Joe's notes clearly pointed in that direction. Fred had added to the dialogue in his own hand as well. His notes were brief, but honest. Charles knew his friend well enough to see that. Perhaps he too would find the courage to pray, as suggested. Perhaps he would have to pay the ultimate price for the ultimate Gift as Fred had? He whispered that much to the Almighty as he pulled the van onto A2 heading East toward Siberia.

BOOK TITLE HERE





The Long Road Home

**The Sequel to PONTIFUS and
A Guide to the 2059/2060 World's Fair**

By Bob Kirchman

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But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your

love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble." -- Psalm 59:16

Fred shuddered as his captor lifted the goat carcass to bleed it.

"Tonight's supper!" the man laughed roughly. He handed his axe to his companion who rounded the corner. Then Fred saw the van speed off and he was quite sure his life had been spared for only a little bit of time. "You will make good worker." The captor said; "Then you go way of goat!"

Enslaved! How unlike the world of "freedoms" he had grown up in.

Good men had labored for centuries to end the vile institution of human enslavement, but the new 'enforcers' of Worldstate's remote highways had no respect for the hard-fought battle for human dignity and freedom. Fred thought of the history class where he had slept through a lecture on the Barbary Pirates. These brigands had taken men off of American ships and pressed them into their service. Thomas Jefferson had sent in the Marines.

But now, Worldstate was stepping forward to fill the void left by the disappearance of millions of people. Their rule was pretty universal and they had conscripted the vilest of terrorists as their enforcers. There would be no Marines, Fred thought to himself.

And so began the days of his unwilling service. Fred's strong physique made him a useful worker and he found that his mind was quite engaged in ways he could not have foreseen. Now, left without his Bible and the little guide that had sparked his interest in matters Eternal, he found that those things pushed their way into his mind as he labored. He was surprised at how he was not in such despair as he

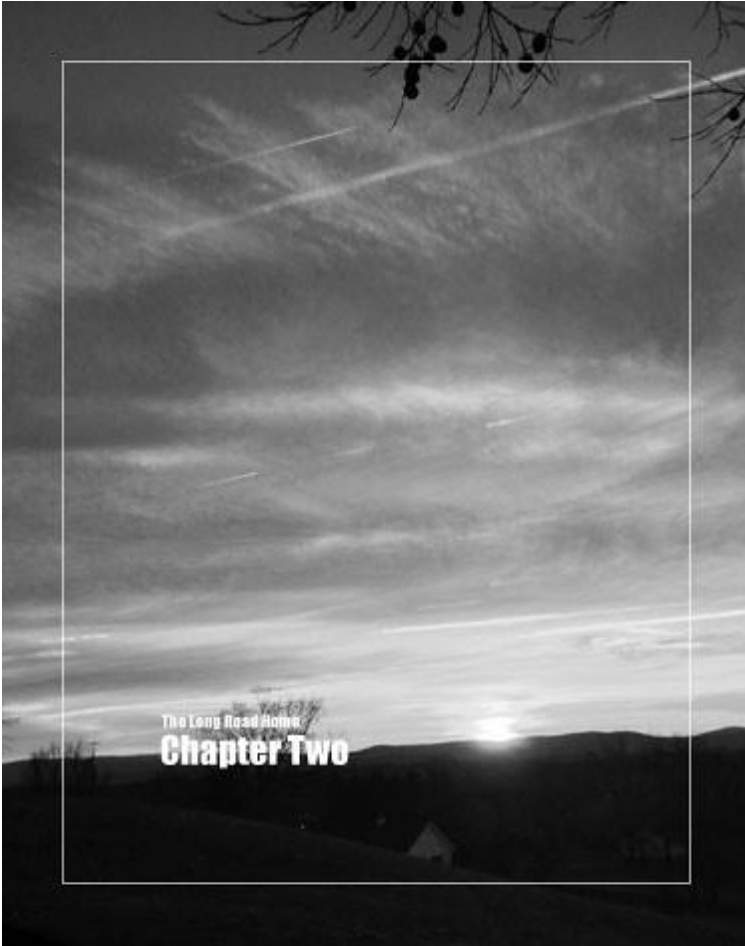
thought he would be. Though he lived with the constant threat of death, it was losing its fearsomeness. Though he indeed was treated roughly, he was finding some sure reservoir of strength to draw from. He didn't understand it, but he didn't need to.

Something was drawing Fred's attention to beauty... even in the midst of this bleakness. Things such as clouds in the sky and the golden light of evening, when his labors ceased, the young man counted as treasure as he embraced them as simple gifts from above. Indeed, he was conversing with the Divine. That did not override some of his anguish and confusion, but like the reassurance markers that told you the Bering Strait Bridge was in a certain direction, they pointed to some point of resolution.

Would it be in this life, or in a life to come? Fred did not know.

Had he known the old hymns he would have known the sweet juxtaposition of hope in Heaven dwelling comfortably alongside hope for joys in this present life as well. The old saints could have shown him that a savoring of nature's majesty was quite naturally a prelude to the great story of Redemption. That was the movement in the symphony that preceded the great crescendo of Eternity! One did not need the life he lived to be perfection in order to feel this joy. In fact, it seemed to take root most vigorously in a variety of circumstances.

Perfection was not necessary for it to grow. Joe, who had disappeared at Taba, was far from perfect in his living it out. The dedication he had for his friends had its roots in something that now called Fred to want it as well. But those family members he identified with that type of living were now gone. "Who would be able to show me this 'more perfect way?' Fred wondered, for there was indeed a noticeable vacuum in the world in the wake of the disappearances.



Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more." --Psalm 39:12,13

Days stretched into months. Time lost its meaning in the sameness of the work and weather. The highway patrol force was enjoying the

labor that Fred gave them, so there was no great hurry in their minds to send him on 'the way of the goat.' In the bleak sameness of his routine, Fred's soul was stirred to great imaginings. Though there was no hope of escape, there was a hope that always arrived just in time to fight back the demons of despair.

Trucks rolled by. There were few cars now and most of the convoys were military. Fred saw that there was little likelihood of escape. The drivers were closely watched and most of the private loads were sealed. There was simply no place to slip out of sight and ride away.

Then one day a local came through with a canvas topped truck carrying boxes of food and such. The agents detained the driver as his paperwork was out of order and he was crossing into their sector. As a bit of haggling over the bribe amount took place, Fred saw his chance. His captors were deep in discussion, arms waving and voices loud, as Fred slipped into the back. He had no idea if this would work, but he decided to go for it. There was a bit of space in the haphazard jumble of containers that just might work and Fred eased himself into the void.

The haggling droned on. "Whatever these guys were angling for, it must be good." Fred thought to himself. Eventually it appeared that a deal was cast and Fred's two captors appeared presently at the back of the truck with the driver. A large box was wrestled off of the truck and the agents strained to carry it to the customs house as the driver sped off.

How far would this ride take him and would he ever find friendly help? That was something Fred could not know, but his instinct had

brought him this far. The honorable art of striking a deal had consumed three men's attention when he was most vulnerable. He had not been captured. Fred found himself praying, asking God to help and direct him. For the time being he bounced along on what turned out to be a very long ride.

Then, just as the truck pulled through a checkpoint on the border of the Russian Federation, there was mechanical trouble. The border agents obviously knew this guy and waved him along so that he could get some help. The agents didn't want to deal with a disabled truck so they performed a rather perfunctory inspection and let it go. There was an Intercontinental Logistics bunkhouse and service compound 40 kilometers in and if the driver reached it, there was a mechanic's shop that might give him some honest help.

The wheezing diesel chugged its way into the lights of the compound and the driver began pleading his case. Fred decided this might be a good place to make his move and when he saw his opening he slipped out of the truck and around to the back of the driver's mess. There were some Russian cooks there talking with the manager in English. Fred quietly approached the kitchen door. One of the cooks was reading something aloud in his broken English and Fred listened in thankful astonishment:

T*herefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of G-d. For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. They are surprised that you do not join them in their*

reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you. But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body, but live according to G-d in regard to the spirit.

T*he end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of G-d's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of G-d. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength G-d provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.*

D*ear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of G-d rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. For it is time for judgment to begin with G-d's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of G-d? And,*

I*f it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the*

ungodly and the sinner?”

S*o then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.” – 1 Peter 4*

I’m sure the ICL employees who jumped at Fred’s arrival at the door were momentarily convinced that they were about to see that passage play out in their own lives, for what they were doing was indeed something not encouraged by Worldstate. Fred introduced himself and it was soon clear that all of them were trying to learn the more perfect way. Sergy, Peter and Vladimir were their names. They had found a well-word ‘Guide to Priscilla and Aquilla’ in a missing comrade’s belongings and in spite of the official decree that all such materials were to be turned in to the authorities, they were sharing it.

Sergy told Fred their story after the shock of their first meeting, and Fred’s admission that he too was studying ‘the way.’ They had put the pieces together in their mind after the Russian Federation President had gone missing during the disappearances. The man had been raised by an atheist KGB grandfather but had shamelessly embraced his Orthodox heritage after finding his Grandmother’s Bible. That story, though Worldstate Media was suppressing it, had spread like wildfire. All the filter algorithms in the world could not stop the power of friend telling friend face-to-face.

Indeed, Worldstate’s promise of fulfillment through government policy rang hollow with anyone who was familiar with the history of the old Soviet Union and here were three men, not scholars, but men with eyes open, who dared to believe in fulfillment beyond this life.

“We don’t know if there are many of us,” Sergy continued, “But we listen to the drivers and it seems there is a gathering of like-minded disciples up at ‘the bridge.’ By design we don’t have contacts but it seems likely that the same guidance that brought you to us will serve to take you to them.

Every week there is a small van that carries paperwork and some supplies from ICL central offices in Wales, in the Alaskan Republic. Sometimes the driver is a man we know, who is with us. Perhaps he could take you closer to your home. There is a problem in that you have no papers, but we will have to give you an identity if we can find someone who looks like you in the ranks of our employees who have disappeared.”

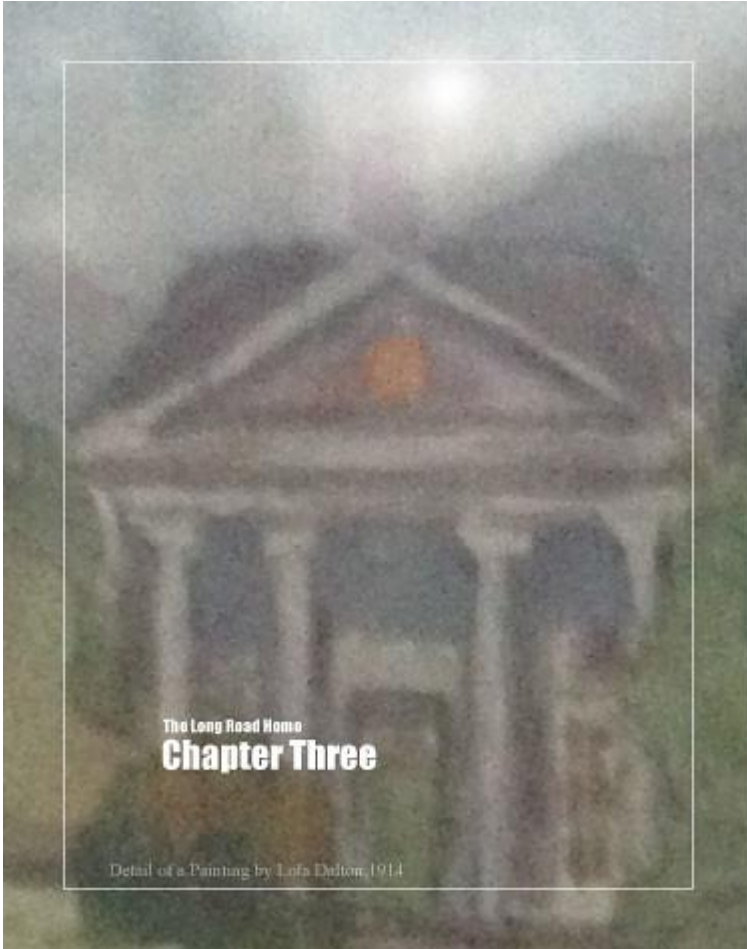
We have done that before,” Peter added. “We believe the man got as far as Diomedé.”

Peter referred here to the island along the bridge where one first came into America from Asia. The evacuated tube trains were not passing straight through anymore as Worldstate had established her new capital in the Alaskan Republic. They monitored their borders closely.

Take a look at the ‘new you!’” said Vladimir as he handed Fred the mirror. Fred stared in stunned silence at the change rendered by hair dye and prosthetic makeup. What he saw unnerved him and Vladimir asked him about it. “Nothing,” said Fred, “I just feel like I’ve seen a ghost!” Come, said Peter, we’ll give you your walking papers. Sergy handed him a folder. Fred carefully opened it... he didn’t want to know the truth he feared was coming. He took a nervous gulp as he

arranged his new wallet and passport folders... “I am now Joseph Robert Kirke,” he gasped, “It is a pleasure to make your acquaintance!”

The supply shuttle was quite erratic in its schedule, so it would be weeks before Fred would reach the International Date Line.



Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah.

Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall

gather them.

And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.” -- Psalm 39:5-

7

The Big Diomedea Service Plaza was by now fully in operation again.

The van pulled into a loading dock behind the kitchen that served the various restaurants in the building that spanned the highway. The driver helped Fred... now ‘Joe’ with his bag. “For Heaven’s sake, remember your new name!” whispered the driver. “Come with me.” Now the two entered the busy kitchen and its pantries. “We need to slip into the Ladies’ room,” the driver said. ‘Joe’ hesitated but the man urgently pushed him along. The room was momentarily deserted but the driver made some frantic gestures in front of a mirror and quickly pushed them both into a trucker’s shower room. Locking the door, the driver held his finger to his lips, calling for silence. He opened a locker in the room and the back soon opened as well, revealing a secret passageway.

Joe’ went on alone. The dark hallway appeared to be a steam tunnel and it went on for a considerable distance before ‘Joe’ sensed the presence of another human being. “This was Mama Greene’s greatest triumph!” the shadowy figure whispered. “Call me ‘Ransom.’ You might be interested to know that when the great bridge was built, Mama Greene was the Pastor’s wife and she sort of shocked everyone by taking a job at the service plaza. She was the reason many of her coworkers found ‘The Way,’ but there was one thing about the great bridge that really troubled her...

It was the young girls, they passed through here constantly in the

company of their benefactor-captors... headed for the vilest and most degrading form of servitude. The secret passageway allowed her to whisk many of them out of here unseen. She would lead them through this portal into a new life!”

They walked along as ‘Ransom’ spoke. “Now I shall show you what redemption looked like for these young women.” Passing now from back to front of a similar cabinet to the one by which they had entered the tunnel, they found themselves in the locker room of some sort of workspace. Mannequins and sewing machines identified it as some sort of clothing factory. “Mama Greene knew that without the hope of something better, the girls would simply disappear into servitude again... so she created this! Here she created a line of designer clothing and cosmetics, right here on Big Diomedé. Everyone thought they came out of New York City in the ‘Lower 48,’ but that was not the truth.

This is the basement of one of the college residences in the original Biosphere. I know you may have heard that this area is permanently sealed off due to a lab accident that happened as a result of the disappearances. Indeed there was a small radiation spill, but that has been dealt with. We ‘seed’ a bit of radiation near the entrances to the Biosphere and that keeps the enforcers away. Even better, I and some of my fellow staff are in permanent ‘isolation’ here because we are classified as ‘radiation survivors.’ We get supplies from the Service Plaza via a robot carrier but no-one wants to come in and bother us!”

Joe’ was now ushered up the stairs where he was assigned a little room and ‘Ransom’ left him to freshen up. The room was simple and tastefully furnished. On a nightstand was a copy of the book: ‘Notes to Priscilla and Aquilla’ and a Gideon Bible. ‘Joe’ picked up the little

book and picked up where he had left off with it. He was dozing off and dreaming about magic wardrobes, or something like that when 'Ransom' knocked on his door, inviting him to dinner.

Stepping out of the little building, 'Joe found himself in a place of well-manicured lawns and somewhat overgrown gardens. Little robot mowers quietly striped the deserted greens and a perfusion of bright hollyhocks bordered them. Here and there was a miniature horse contently grazing on the crisp pastures. "Another of Mama's inspirations!" the man said. "She insisted on there being butterflies and hummingbirds here. The little horses were one of her projects too. She thought they would eventually replace the little mowers."

Above them was the dome of the Biosphere, which sealed out the harsh Wintery weather of the far North. The panes were blue-tinted and milky so no one could photograph what went on inside... they were ionized so that you could electrically clear them when there was a glorious sky that everyone wanted to see but during the months of prolonged darkness they remained milky... reflecting back the full-spectrum lighting that simulated a more normal day. The Biosphere was driven by geothermal energy and since it had its own source and power plant, no one bothered to ask why it was still running. "When the Dome is clear," 'Ransom' continued, "You can see across that green to open sea and the rising sun! As the sun first illuminates a new day, we can see it here." 'Joe' continued to take in the wonders of this new place. As they walked to the refectory, a brilliant hummingbird or butterfly frequently punctuated their conversation.

As they rounded a corner, 'Joe' froze. He pointed silently to a rather large BEAR who was ambling into the building they intended to enter. "Oh," said 'Ransom,' "You will need to make the acquaintance of

‘Mister Bultitude!’ You see, we had a little biological research lab here studying hibernation. They hoped to find out how to slow down the human metabolism to fight diseases, so they engaged the services of a most experienced hibernator! He’s quite friendly and the staff all love him.”

Around tables in a paneled room, a small but rather diverse group of people were enjoying some rather deep conversation. ‘You will get to meet our students in the days to come.’ Said ‘Ransom,’ “but for now enjoy a decent meal and our hospitality.” The students actually dined in courses, which they took turns serving to their fellows. There were tablecloths and cloth napkins... the whole setting seemed to be from another Century, right down to the soft lighting. Ransom explained: “Dr. Greene felt that the high dinner was often a better setting for learning than the classroom. In the day, students actually dressed for dinner. Greene was not one to write dress-codes and you are quite fine in what you are wearing, but you must know that Dr. Greene was one to nurture traditions of meaning, particularly when they were instituted by his students.

I remember when his little daughter would dine here with her parents and politely tell the young men how nice they looked. Indeed there was a sense of a higher way of living established here, aside from bears in the refectory! The students nicknamed her ‘Queen Lucy,’ for she, tomboy as she was, loved to put on a long dress for the dinners. The students would always feign wonder at the ‘transformation,’ but in reality they saw it as another affirmation of the work they were engaged in. They loved her for it even as they teased her mercilessly when her smiling face appeared upside down from the tree she was hiding in!

After dinner, ‘Ransom’ and ‘Joe’ took a leisurely stroll on the campus grounds. “Here is the first real house that was built on Big Diomedes,” said ‘Ransom’ as he pointed out the little parsonage. It is empty now for since the family disappeared none of us have wanted to disturb it. Most of the good Doctor’s books found their way over to the college anyway and though those of us who remain did not at the time love his G-d, we loved Dr. Greene! We try to continue the work here as he would have wanted us to.”

Walking beyond the campus, the two men passed the Zimmerman family houses, which were also dark and uninhabited. “Here is where the men and women who designed and built the great bridge ultimately spent their lives. It is no accident that the houses look to be of the same size and design as the parsonage. They were all built by a Swedish designer from Virginia who valued beauty and economy in construction. In the end, the Zimmerman and O’Malley families sought a fairly simple and unencumbered life as they pursued their various projects to build the ‘Better Kingdom.’

Joe’ wanted to learn more. “How does one come to study here?” he asked. He was used to admissions forms and standardized testing from his academic career in the ‘Lower 48,’ so he was a bit surprised when his host said: “You’ve already begun the process if you wanted to.” ‘Joe’ was perplexed, but ‘Ransom’ continued: “It always started with dinner with Dr. Greene. Greene would watch you as you interacted with him and his family. He was particularly observant of how you treated children and how you treated us who were in the custodial department. You could be the brightest bulb in the bunch but if you had no respect for a man in coveralls you were already out.

Greene had this thing about ‘Imago Dei,’ the ‘Image of G-d’ being in every person. If you couldn’t see it, he felt like he had nothing he could teach you. I remember once when some powerful leader decided that his son should get educated by Greene. Greene was so recognizable then as an academic leader and a man of G-d, but Rupert Zimmerman put on his coveralls and was replacing lamps and ballast in the building when the young man arrived. He was indeed impeccably dressed and Zimmerman bided his time as the youth waited in the lobby. He presently saw his opportunity and asked from his ladder if the young man would hand him up a bulb.

The youth responded in an arrogant manner that he was here for an appointment with the head of the college and didn’t want to get his hands dirty! Soon Greene’s assistant ushered him in to the office and the matter was forgotten... until a few hours later at dinner at the Greene’s house where an impeccably dressed Rupert Zimmerman joined them. Greene’s wife and daughter had been painting together that day and conspicuously wore the evidence on their fingers. Zimmerman, though he’d used a finger brush, still wore the evidence of his encounter with a rather dirty fixture he had worked on.

Greene began the pre-dinner introductions: ‘I assume you have met Mr. Zimmerman, former chair of the Zimmerman Bridge and Highway Company? He now serves on the board of this college.’ Zimmerman, for his part said later that he had really had to apologize to the young man later for the way he was enjoying the silent dinner. ‘There I was, savoring that macaroni and cheese in silence, and **LOVING** every minute of it!’ Rupert confessed later. Needless to say, the poor young man voluntarily withdrew his application but later became a very wise fellow in his own right... at a regular university, or perhaps we should say in **SPITE** of a regular university! The greatest

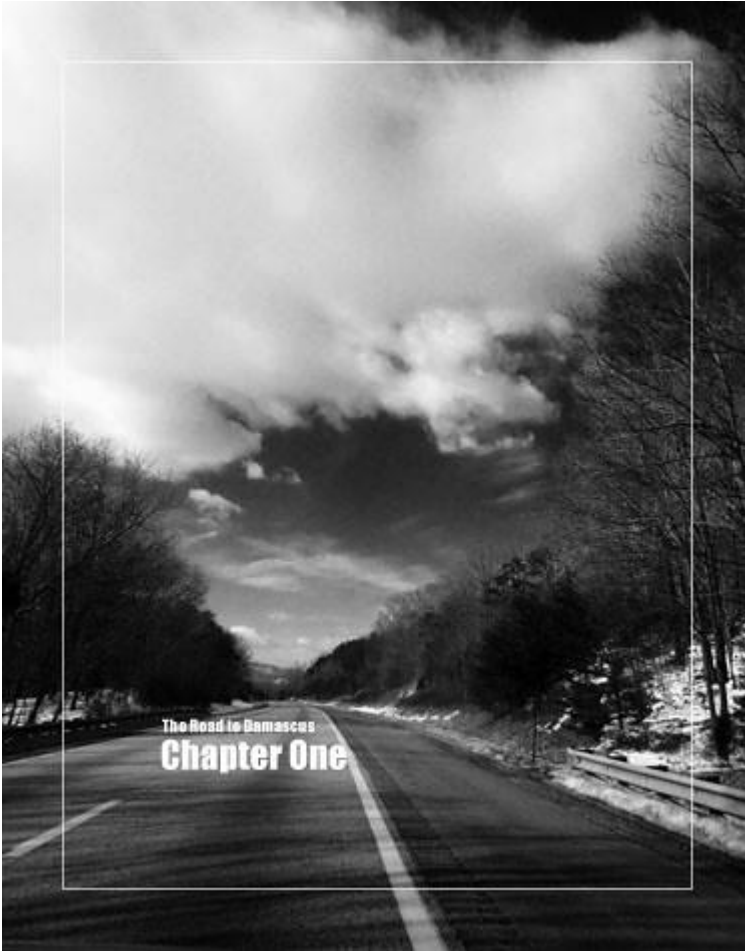
lesson he ever learned, he would recount in speeches around the world, was taught to him that night at that dinner table!”

Ransom,’ for his part had been listening intently to ‘Joe’s’ story even as he touted the wonders of the Biosphere for him. He sensed that this young man was ready to move into some more perfect way of discipleship.

And so began a time of learning and wonder for ‘Joe.’ He began to get to know the handful of other students better as they wrestled with Scripture and its application together. He was sad that there were no longer any women there, wondering at the joy that ‘Queen Lucy’ must have cast over such a world. Those who were here, he learned, were the ones who had shut out the knowledge of the Way from their lives, even as those around them pleaded to Heaven for their loved ones to taste Eternity. They had been, sadly, like Kay in the palace of the Snow Queen, blinded to the wonders meant for them and untouched by the warm tears of their Gerdas. Untouched that is until the disappearance caused those prayers and tears to finally melt their hearts and in their anguish they turned to that which had been most precious to those who loved them.

The love that had melted their hearts was something they all cherished and that love drew them together. Outside the Biosphere, Mátyás Corvinus, head of the Worldstate Combined States Government, was working very hard to eliminate this movement, but even the threat of beheading by his ‘enforcers’ could not compete with redemptive love. Five hundred miles away in Fairgate, Corvinus was indeed plotting their demise, but for now the little company was safely hidden at the ‘End of the World.’





The Road to Damascus

**The Sequel to PONTIFUS,
A Guide to the 2059/2060 World's Fair
and The Long Road Home**

By Bob Kirchman

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F*or thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.” – Acts 22:15*

Mátyás Corvinus was the oldest of three brothers. They had been called ‘children of destiny’ as they made their marks on the great stage of human affairs. The youngest had risen to prominence in the church... indeed he was considered a leader and unifier.

Middle brother Alexey rose in the realm of government and finance. He had been Prime Minister of Poland but his influence extended deep into the world banking system. Now he was Secretary General of the United Nations, no longer in New York City, but meeting in the compound of the Centre for World Peace in Iraq... that is until the war, when along with Mátyás, they were forced to move to Alaska.

Matyás was the ‘face’ of the movement, but in the day-to-day operations of Worldstate it was clear that there was a ‘Trinity.’ Not exactly a holy one, but a triune leadership existed.

The unexpected result of the Middle-East war had been their sudden departure from Baghdad to the wilds of Alaska. Israel now occupied the full extent of territories that were assigned to it in the Holy Texts. They had soundly defeated their attacking neighbors and were indeed an embarrassment to Worldstate, who labored under the premise that one world government would lead to lasting peace and prosperity.

Having appropriated the finest quarters in Fairgate/Fairbanks, the three brothers laid out their plans to bring this about. The ‘Christian’ churches were pretty weak and had been easily brought together. When the youngest brother met with the acting Pope (the real Pontiff had disappeared at the time of the great disappearances), it was clear who was in charge. Dispensing quickly with ‘divisive’ and ‘narrow’ distinctives, the unified church was now being primed to usher in the new world order.

There were, notably, some holdouts in the wider world of religion.

Judaism in particular maintained a distinct and historic place and Islam refused to bow to anyone but their prophet. The older Corvinus skillfully manipulated them into alliances however, and created a sort of peace.

But then there was ‘The Way.’ Unlike the great world religions it had no human seat of power to speak of. There were no great radio speeches or media outlets for it. The elder Corvinus had made sure of that. And yet it spread... friend telling friend, even in a world that had finally dispensed with belief in the Divine, it still held on. Corvinus would not have minded that, but it was a ‘way’ that its followers could not help but share. It had the potential, Corvinus felt, to ‘turn the world upside-down.’

The keeping of world peace demanded that this movement be silenced. The ‘enforcers’ did a great work in their bloody suppression of ‘The Way,’ but it was not enough. Corvinus would often find himself traveling to some remote part of the world to do the work himself... and this was bothering him. He was the ‘thinking’ one of the brothers, the one who’s initial inspiration had created the ‘Centre for

World Peace.’ “Why,” he wondered, “was the attainment of world peace so bloody?”

Then too, there was the uneasiness of the three brothers’ position at the top of human evolution. That elevated position should have cleared their minds of the old superstitions but it was clear that the Brothers Corvinus were still under the influence of something greater than themselves and it was not benevolent! The ‘inspirations’ of the three were seeming more dark and troublesome all the time.

And then Mátyás Corvinus was informed that the leadership of ‘The Way’ had been discovered in a place in the Middle-East. Corvinus roused his valet and packed his bags as his private jet was readied for a flight to Damascus!

The flight was turbulent, but Corvinus had a fitful sleep anyway. Entering Syrian airspace the plane was on approach when a bright explosion shook the sky. The pilots, and Corvinus were blinded. The old airplane had a fairly sophisticated autopilot and the pilot hastily engaged it by pushing the code into a console. Interestingly though, the software had not been updated after the war. The airport that the little plane eased into a descent for was no longer an active one. The plane eased itself onto a deserted runway.

The man who had no identity, known only as ‘Ransom’ looked up. He had come to encourage a small house church movement in this remote part of the world and was awaiting his own plane arriving at the abandoned field for transportation out. Now he and his friends were trapped. Indeed the plane that landed now was conspicuously painted with Worldstate livery. “We’ve been found out,” said

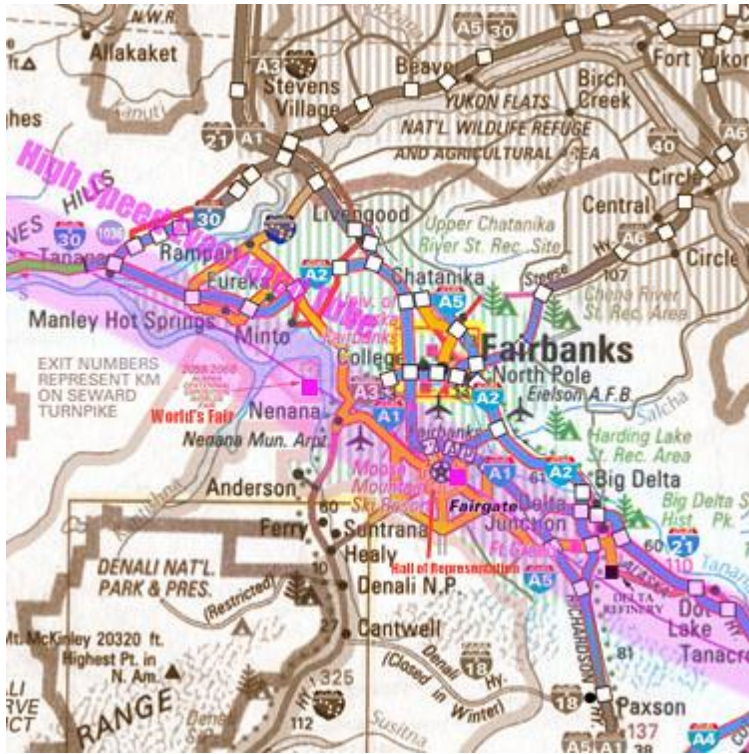
'Ransom.' "Prepare to meet our Master!"

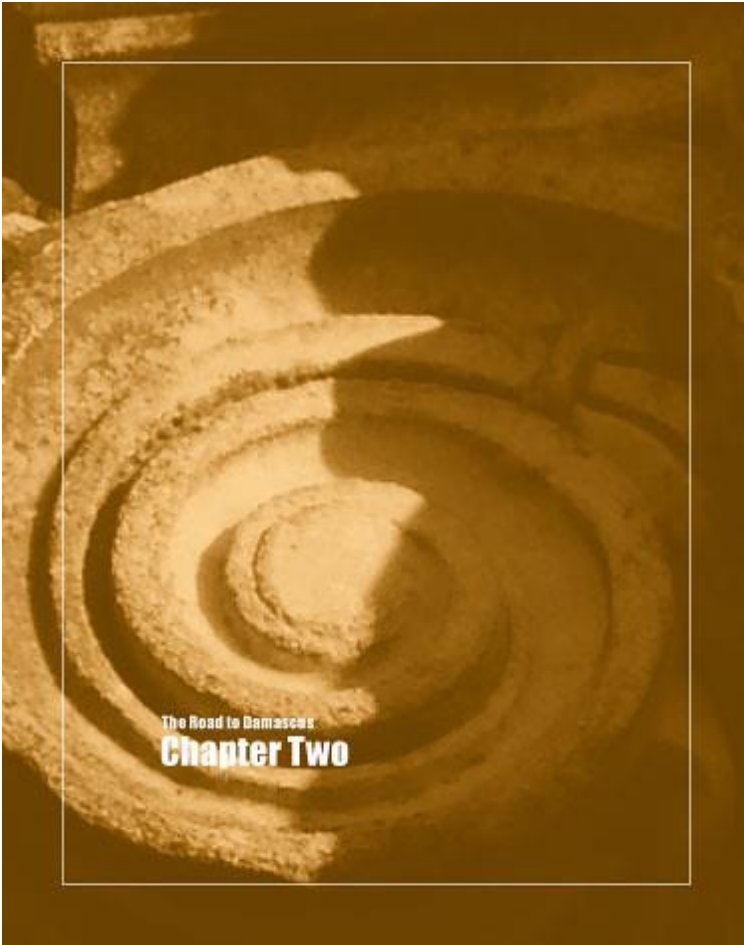
But there was not the expected rush of enforcers... only three men staggering out of an airplane, blind as bats! They were quite unable to use their side-arms. 'Ransom' felt compelled to go forward to greet them... even as he motioned to his companions to get away. "President Corvinus!" the shadowy old man half gasped in amazed greeting.

The conversation that took place in the hours following their meeting was one Mátyás would never forget. Indeed his fitful dreams (if they *WERE* just dreams) had convinced him "it was hard to kick against the goads."



The unique layout of Fairgate uses a grid derived from nature.





He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide
under the shadow of the Almighty.” – Psalm 91:1

And so the man whom all assumed to be the ‘Beast’ of Revelation
came quietly to the little group of disciples on Big Diomedes. ‘BSB One’

landed on the abandoned strip after a coded assurance was flashed with a mirror from the ground. The pilots of Zimmerman's operation had always maintained an edge by simply remembering old ways of doing things. After his communications had all dropped out on the bridge years ago, Zimmerman had insisted that 'old fashioned' backups be employed. Thus his pilots knew semaphore code and periodically dropped out their 'new' technology on purpose to keep themselves alert.

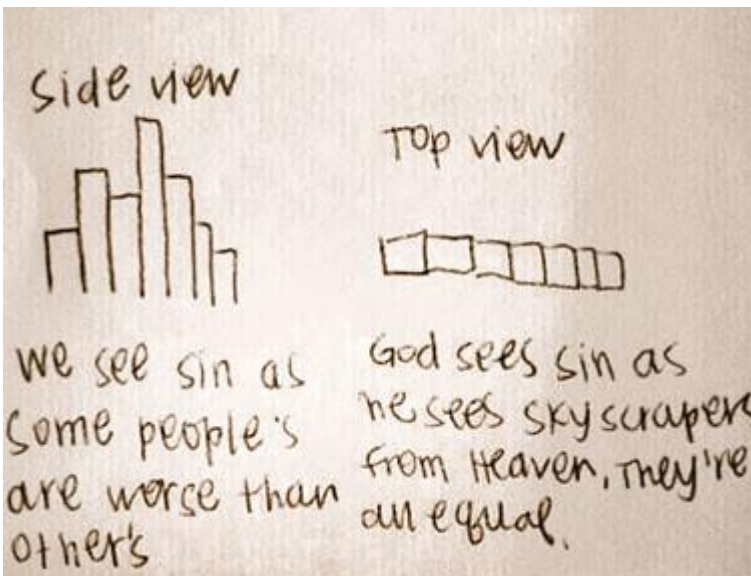
The Worldstate Plane was left untouched on the abandoned runway.

'Ransom' concluded that any attempt to embellish the story it told would make it more suspicious anyway. Any one of a myriad of rebel forces operating in the area could have abducted the crew and the subsequent investigation would divert Worldstate resources for quite some time. 'Ransom' for his part was becoming quite at home with the whole "hidden in plain sight" phenomenon. Someday it might cost him his life... but he longed ever more to hear the commendation: "Well done, good and faithful servant." from the Master.

Of more immediate concern to 'Ransom' was the safety of his fellows. He felt sure of Corvinus' changed heart, but could he risk others' lives on his own feelings. Here was a man who had killed many of his fellow pilgrims. Yet here was a working of the Divine that was not at all unprecedented.

As Corvinus and 'Ransom' prayed together, Mátyás had indeed seen his sight restored! Still, 'Ransom' wrestled with what to do with his new disciple. In the end he brought him blindfolded to Big Diomedé where he was coldly and cautiously received by the company. Indeed some were present who had seen loved ones murdered by this man's decree so all found themselves asking if the Divine could change a life.

Not the least of these was Corvinus himself. ‘Ransom’ was working beside him in the kitchen, preparing the institute’s signature macaroni and cheese. Corvinus, though born and bred to power, was taking a liking to manual work and that encouraged his mentor greatly. “Is it possible for G-d to forgive one such as me, so *‘unnaturally born’* into His Kingdom?” he asked. ‘Ransom’ was stabbed to the heart, for he still wrestled with his feelings for this man who was now his apprentice. Yet he answered by drawing a vertical bar graph. The bars were of varying heights and ‘Ransom’ wrote the names of the various sins under them. Murder and deceit rose pretty high. Genocide was the tallest. Petty theft ranked not so much, but there was definitely a range of possibilities. “This is how WE see sin, here among the sinners.” Then ‘Ransom’ drew a second graph. This time populated only by uniform squares in a row. “This is how the DIVINE sees sin,” said the man, “from ABOVE. He sees not the degree, only the sin! Thus it is within His way of seeing that your redemption is possible!”



He then told the story of slaver John Newton, who had destroyed at least as many lives as Corvinus in his day. Newton, in his changed life, became a great minister of the Gospel that had brought change to him. He had written the great hymn: “Amazing Grace” to the tune of the ‘slave notes,’ those notes found in African music. Indeed, ‘Ransom’ noted, REDEMPTION was one of the Divine’s most cherished works!

What of my two brothers?” Corvinus asked another time as the two walked to dinner in the golden evening light. ‘Ransom’ caught himself for a moment, then said: *“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”* “That promise is in Peter’s second letter and it is true. He has certainly shown that patience to me. I do not know what will happen with your brothers... that battle must be won within each of their own hearts. To be sure, there are those who reject the gracious hand of the Divine and we see from this writing that it causes Him sorrow.

I do not know why this is so, but it should be contrasted with the forced compliance that is the bedrock of your Worldstate. You yourself have said that it is not freedom and you discovered, you said too late, that it wrought no change in your heart. Without the continual oversight of Worldstate, mankind was destined to descend into chaos. The Divine, in contrast, rules very little from without, but if allowed to do so He brings great change within.

As a ruler of that former world, you enjoyed unlimited access to pleasures and power, but did it complete you? No, for most certainly

your recognition of a void in your heart has led you here. Here our life is simple, but our simple pleasures fill us richly.”

And so, Mátyás Corvinus became a student of the Way.

T*his second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:*

K*nowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*

F*or this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of G-d the Heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:*

W*hereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:*

B*ut the Heavens and the Earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*

But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.**

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

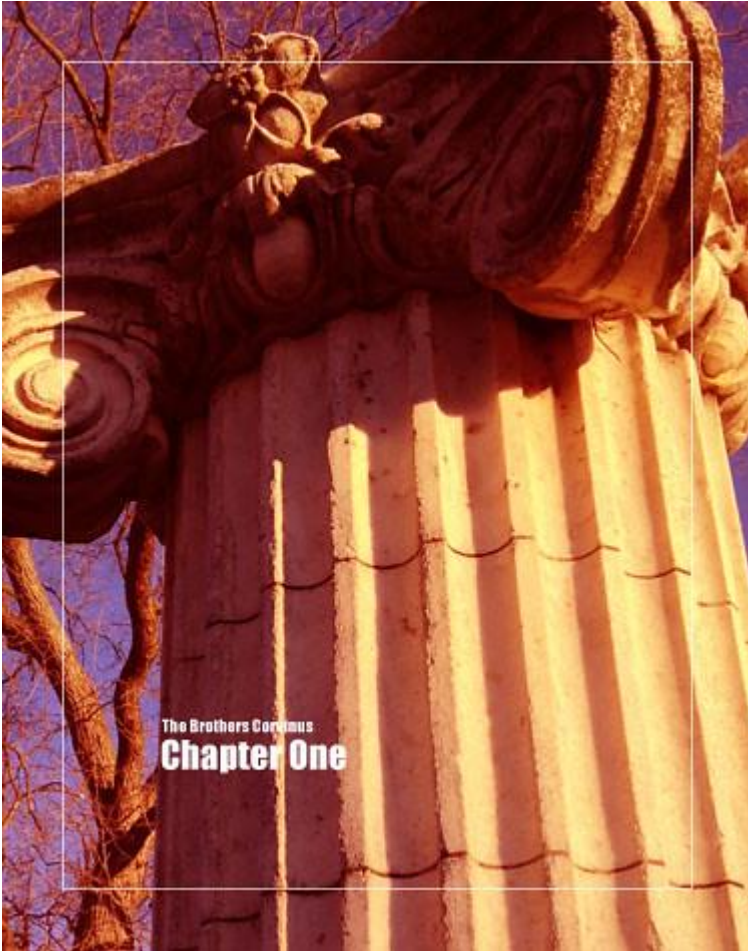
Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of G-d, wherein the Heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? **Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new Heavens and a new Earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.** Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore,

beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.

B*ut grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.” – 2 Peter 3*





The Brothers Corvinus

**The Sequel to PONTIFUS and
NOVUS VIA**

By Bob Kirchman

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F*riendship is born at that moment when one person says to
another: What! You too? I thought I was the only one.” – C. S. Lewis*

Y*ou are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream” – C. S. Lewis.*

I *have found a desire within myself that no experience in this world can satisfy; the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.” – C. S. Lewis*

E*veryone must leave something behind when he dies, my grandfather said. A child or a book or a painting or a house or a wall built or a pair of shoes made. Or a garden planted. Something your hand touched some way so your soul has somewhere to go when you die, and when people look at that tree or that flower you planted, you're there. It doesn't matter what you do, he said, so long as you change something from the way it was before you touched it into something that's like you after you take your hands away. The difference between the man who just cuts lawns and a real gardener is in the touching, he said. The lawn-cutter might just as well not have been there at all; the gardener will be there a lifetime.” – Ray Bradbury, Fahrenheit 451*

Mister Bultitude’s birthday celebration was going on. The little college always celebrated this event, beginning on November 22 and ending on November 29th. In a happier time, the event was always punctuated by Thanksgiving Break, and the students would return to their families and more festivities. This was actually a celebration initiated by Mrs. Greene and the great bear was feted with her famous blueberry cake. The students would read C. S. Lewis’s ‘The Abolition of Man’ in preparation and they would use the old Gothic chapel as a backdrop as they acted out portions of the novel “That Hideous

Strength.”

In happier times, the female students would fill the roles of Jane, Mother Dimble, Ivy Maggs and Major Hardcastle, but now there were only the few men remaining, so the dramatic readings were more subdued. In any case, Lewis’s dystopia had become all too real and this portion of the celebration now loomed even more as a call to action. They were still carried out in the evening with the great window of the chapel illuminated from within and soft “blue” lighting on the old stone without.

Ransom’ explained to Mátyás that his pseudonym was actually lifted from the book and he felt it really described his life. There was a clear picture in his mind of how the Magnificent One had ‘become sin’ for him and had indeed lovingly renewed his twisted life. ‘Ransom’ was not his real name at all. The hard-living maintenance supervisor of the college had retreated there from a failed marriage and failed recovery from substance abuse. Finally, in the climate of giving love and high expectations provided by the college shops, he had been clean for five years at the time of the disappearances. Even on warm days, he always wore an old sweater. He dressed for dinner in a long-sleeved jacket and tie. Anticipating the question he explained that he had been a special forces operative in his younger days... a tough man who had killed people. His arms were covered with tattoos!

Sadly, ‘Ransom’ had resisted the underlying Source of that love and felt he had simply had a ‘lucky break’ in coming here. He silently kept the walls up to prevent his consideration of any absolute unseen realities, but Greene, the president of the college, had planted a seed. It took root in the days following Greene’s mysterious departure, and now ‘Ransom’ was indeed the heir of his great work. Indeed it was the

LOVE, freely extended by the residents of this place, to the broken girls as they learned the perfumer's art and fashion design and to him and his fellow maintenance men. Sometimes you'd find yourself working alongside a man like Zimmerman, who had built the great bridge, but he picked up litter and changed light bulbs with the rest of the crew. It was a community, Greene had said, not unlike that of the American frontier days. Everyone cared for everyone else. There was what Greene would call an overwhelming sense of IMAGO DEI, the stamp of the Divine on each member of the little village.

We are all wounded adopted children of the Master," 'Ransom' said to Corvinus one evening as they strolled to the refectory. "Your conflicted feelings are not necessarily reflective of what is true about you, but they speak of areas where you might seek healing. All of us here have a story and if we examine ours with some honesty, we will see the Master speaking into it. We fit badly into this world, it is true, but let me tell you a secret... ***we were made for a better world!***"



Illustration by Kristina Elaine Greer.

Mátyás Corvinus had been born in Hungary. He was the oldest of three brothers and the three became known in their village for their daring exploits. Mátyás was the thinker. Middle brother Alexey was the one who often led them into great adventures and the youngest was reflective in a different manner. As youths, the three had managed to make their way across the Eurasian continent one summer hiding in rail cars. That this feat was considered quite

impossible fired a bit of a legend about them in the minds of their fellow villagers. The Summer that the boys simply disappeared, only to show up in Madagan, far into Siberia, earned them not only beatings from their abusive father, but the unspoken admiration of every adolescent in their circle.

At university, the three excelled at football (soccer) and their studies. Mátyás studied Government and Philosophy, Alexey business and finance and the youngest gravitated toward theology and Philosophy. Alexey entered government as the others continued their studies. He served in the local assembly as he built a small communications company. Eventually He became the Prime Minister and the owner of most of the wireless network serving the Bering Strait Bridge Highway in Siberia.

The youngest became a priest in Poland and eventually was in the College of Cardinals. He was considered to be in line for the Papacy by some.

Mátyás, upon his graduation from university, was appointed as an ambassador to the United Nations by his brother. Here is charm and ambition set him on a path that would likely have him in line to be Secretary General one day. There were a few millionaire-philanthropists who longed to build a world federal state. They saw the brothers Corvinus as the means to that end. The silent investment of their new ‘partners’ insured that everything the brothers touched turned to gold.

Their path assured, the brothers Corvinus enjoyed all the pleasures and prestige this world had to offer. Their ‘handlers’ groomed them

for a world crisis where they would take charge and offer solutions. When certain world leaders and the bulk of opposition were overcome, they would make their move.

That opposition became more and more defined in the years proceeding the ‘disappearances.’

Summarized, they might be seen as those who believed in any sort of reality greater than what was seen. Religion was useful to control human behavior, but dangerous if it motivated one to believe that there were things worth dying for. God, country and family could motivate those who loved them to reckless sacrifice.

Besides, such oversight of the human condition was easy to cast as ‘oppressive.’ You couldn’t enjoy the rich pleasures of the world because of archaic restraints. Many young people were all too ready to cast off the chains of restraint and define their lives in new ways. Society could now engineer the reality to match one’s personal preferences and ‘old thought’ stood squarely in the path of progress.

Government could better care for human needs and reduce the pull such philosophies had on their followers. Replace the community coming together to rebuild a barn or care for a sick child with a centralized solution and you dulled the pull of localism and faith. Though initially there would be sacrifices to be made, the more equitable distribution of resources through a centralized state would usher in a brave new world. All would be equal (though those who built the new world should enjoy reward for doing so). Refocus those individuals who sought significance through martyrdom into ‘enforcers’ of the new world order and you took that which created

chaos and turned it to promoting peace!

As the United Nations continued to degenerate into an unruly collection of representatives for the despots of the world, Mátyás created the Centre for World Peace on the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers to begin this final solution to the world's woes.

The problem that wouldn't go away was the 'thinkers' who persisted in the notion that a 'better world' awaited them beyond what they saw. The disappearances had indeed decimated their ranks, but there appeared to be resistance still. The failed attempt to destroy Israel had resulted in the displacement of Mátyás Corvinus and his great work. His return to the Middle-East to suppress the opposition had resulted in something no one but the troublesome 'Divine' could have anticipated.

The three-legged stool of power was wobbling awkwardly. The leader of the Centre for World Peace and his crew were missing. Resources were concentrated by Alexey and Worldstate officials in the Middle-East. Israel was suspected in the disappearance of Corvinus, but in actuality knew nothing of it. Their investigation was thorough and convincing. They shared their findings freely with Worldstate.

Of course, the remaining brothers KNEW the likely true cause of their brother's disappearance and as Worldstate bore down on followers of 'The Way,' they restrained their violence and sought to learn more of the structure of the group. Indeed it seemed to be centered in those nations which still practiced religious freedom, such as Israel and Kurdistan, rather than the more enlightened way of 'tolerance,' where you could freely practice your beliefs but you had

better not interject them into the workings of the greater society. The violence of suppressing ‘The Way’ was temporary anyway and if they would just return Mátyás Corvinus, dead or alive, they would be eventually eliminated in due time. For now, it was necessary to keep open some channels of communication, for indeed it was likely that the eldest Corvinus was a hostage... and his life was in great danger.

What made the work of tracking down ‘The Way’ was the absence of wireless communication. Monitoring hard-wired infrastructure yielded nothing as well. Worldstate was at a loss. A movement that did not build itself on social media or public media was something no-one could monitor. Friend told friend. Books of Holy Scripture were not being printed. That was controlled by the government now. Men like ‘Ransom’ would learn passages and recite them verbally for their pupils in various places. These people would copy them and learn them for themselves, destroying the paper version when it was secure in their own minds. The verses contained in the ‘Notes to Priscilla and Aquilla’ would be committed to memory, but the book itself was simply used as a guide to them. Many ‘Priscilla and Aquilla’ groups were meeting now with no visible evidence of that work in hand, simply the knowledge it guided to committed to the heart.

Though various threats and rewards were put forth by Worldstate, the likely fact that Mátyás was a hostage resulted in an effective truce. Local ‘enforcers’ still took it upon themselves to kill followers of ‘The Way,’ but official persecution was at a standstill.

Who wrote the “Notes to Priscilla and Aquilla?” Matyas asked ‘Ransom’ in one of their evening strolls together. He was surprised to be told: “We really don’t know. It is pretty certain that Dr. Greene DIDN’T write it, but it is suspiciously similar to the writings of his

wife. She was a gifted novelist among other things, but no-one can be certain. In any case, there was a certain desire that the work be anonymous.

We have been looking at the Letters of Paul and Peter in our formal classes and how modern thinkers want to assign multiple-authorship and such to diminish their importance. All of these thinkers forget that the works were dictated and there was a certain desire of the human author to stand out of the way of the Divine revelation. Though our little guide is certainly NOT Divine in authorship, we see its anonymity as trying to stand out of the way of Divine revelation as well. That is why we use it to guide us to Scripture, then we purposefully discard it as we let Scripture teach us deeper things about itself.

You and 'Joe' here are on a path so that you yourself will be the guides... sort of like the book 'Fahrenheit 451, where the books are banned and the people 'become' the books. [1.] That is the purpose of the wretched memorization, for one day you will leave here and carry nothing with you on your person to identify you as one of us." Joe interjected: "so, will we teach what is inside us or simply answer questions from this reservoir or knowledge? How exactly will our fellow pilgrims be able to use what we have preserved?"

Ransom' Answered: "We are purposefully vague about that process because we see it as requiring the direction of that same Spirit that made this knowledge available to us in the first place. If we were to prescribe a method, we might perchance find ourselves unwittingly suppressing a move of that same Spirit. Joe, you and Mátyás are both examples of a conversion that occurred outside of the 'normal' way of doing things. I think if you look at your own stories you will discover

what I mean.”



Many people never realized that the 'Northern Lights' fashions and cosmetics were actually produced in Big Diomedede...

BOOK TITLE HERE



...largely due to a very cosmopolitan advertising strategy.



This confusion is continually present in language as we use it. We appear to be saying something very important about something: and actually we are only saying something about our own feelings.” – ‘Gaius and Titius’ in ‘The Green Book’ as quoted by C. S. Lewis in ‘The Abolition of Man’

Indeed it was hard to find much ‘normal’ anymore in the world

outside of the little biosphere. There was still much religion to be found, but it was mostly about feelings and little about truth. Coleridge at the waterfall, where one man called it 'sublime' and another 'pretty' would be hard pressed to express his disgust to the great thinkers of Worldstate, who scoffed at the notion of great truths and great aspirations (beyond the promotion of Worldstate). The world of art and literature had been pushed towards new levels of banality in the works funded by state. Intelligentsia wrote eloquent reviews of 'brilliant' works that were frankly undeserving of such accolades but served well the mission of subverting the whole notion of 'sublime.'

Dr. Greene had asked his librarians to collect images of the great works, which now became important even as Worldstate quietly let them be forgotten if not outright destroyed by the hands of the 'enforcers.' The students studied the works inspired by Man's nobler aspirations even as major galleries presented empty rooms and torn canvasses as 'significant art.'

Many in the wider world felt a new level of hopelessness. In times past, noble values and virtues filtered out from the Faithful to enrich their society. Many had taken this virtue for granted as something inherent in the supposed 'goodness of man.' They were sorely disappointed in the 'new human' wrought by Worldstate. All too soon it was clear that men without a moral compass needed more supervision and restraint than a society could provide short of creating a climate of fear and oppression. Alexey Corvinus assured the people of the world that their 'temporary sacrifice' would usher in the great new world that was now finally possible.

Indeed it was necessary to provide 'bread and circuses' handed out

with the most lavish oratory (talk being cheap), so that the people would comply with the added restrictions caused by the inevitable shortages. Joining the ‘enforcers’ gave you access to more necessities. Resisting them put you at the end of the line. The state was the provider of what little there was. Local community became increasingly irrelevant in the centralized Worldstate economy.

Gone were the myriad of local greenhouse farms where vegetables were grown without chemicals and genetic modification, being locally produced. Great collectives and industrial farms produced large quantities of pallid produce that was “shipable.” The chemical laden methods of the Twentieth Century were returned to as the great companies that produced chemicals and super seeds became public/private entities. The freedom won in the Alaska Revolution and the Northern Territories was lost. In a few corners of the Tundra there were people preserving heirloom species, but they were now considered almost as dangerous as those who adhered to ‘The Way.’

In fact, it was tempting to bury oneself in the monastic beauty of the biosphere and forget the world outside. One could find great solace among the ever-blooming gardens and the rich libraries. ‘Ransom’ felt that that would be a great wrong. “Think of the level of substance abuse, domestic violence and suicide out there.” He said. “The world is seeing what it is like to live without the influence of the Divine, and they are not rejoicing over it. In fact, they seem quite lost when their diversions or their drunkenness are not present. We have a mandate. Though they have no love for us now, they too are those who the Master sacrificed His own life to redeem.”

Indeed ‘The Way,’ though much suppressed, continued to grow in followers and ‘Ransom’ often travelled to faraway places to encourage

them, often riding in the cargo compartments of 'sealed' transport. 'Joe' was beginning to venture out as well. They would go out by twos and though they told many a harrowing story they always came home bringing reason to rejoice.

A Walk in the Garden

Joe, though he indeed was seeing fruit in his work, was restless.

'Ransom' sensed this and as they walked along the green one day he asked him about it. "Is it wrong of me to desire to find a wife... be married and all?" 'Joe' answered, returning question for question. 'Ransom' had quite naturally put that consideration aside, but empathized with his young friend's concern. "In the past, the church often erred by promoting the celibate life as the way to ministry. Paul the Apostle wrote that it was good to be 'as he was,' but it is likely that he had been married earlier and his singleness at the time was not necessarily voluntary. It is likely that his wife died or that he was cast out of his community and suffered a divorce as a result of coming to 'The Way.' In any case, it was good for him as he traveled and endured beatings and imprisonment.

That said, it is NOT a prerequisite for ministry. In fact, Paul speaks often of his friends and colleagues in ministry: Priscilla and Aquilla. It is no mistake that he mentions them together and it is no mistake that her name is often mentioned first, for they TOGETHER taught 'The More Perfect Way.' The Divine is Spirit and Male and Female are created in His image. Thus it was a mistake for the church to discount the importance of women as image-bearers. The 'enforcers' diminish their women to the place of objects and that is highly disturbing. They are most indeed the poorer for it.

No doubt, you are drawn to the flowers, birds and butterflies here.

They and a number of pleasant things here owe their existence to Mrs. Greene. Clearly there is a feminine side to expression of the Glory of G-d and we are privileged to experience it, although vicariously at the present moment.

You are not necessarily right or wrong to desire a wife, but you are honest! The Magnificent One will honor that and you should freely share that with Him in your heart.”

Joe’ replied: “I honestly desire a partner in life, yet we are at a time in history that one would call ‘unprecedented times.’ “ALL times are unprecedented,” ‘Ransom’ replied. “That is why we study so much history here. We learn that at Israel’s darkest moment... when the people were carried off to Persia and the Kingdom destroyed, the prophet told the people to plant vines, build houses and marry and give in marriage. We are always to seek the prosperity of the place we are planted. I cannot tell you how to proceed here, as you know we are a community of MEN, yet as you go out into the wider world, it might be that you will be surprised by joys you cannot now anticipate.”

But might there be sorrows as well?” said ‘Joe.’ “Yes,” said

‘Ransom,’ “I think you will find that in this life, joy and sorrow often walk hand in hand. From my own life though, I can tell you: It is a mistake to shut out joy in an effort to insulate yourself from sorrow. In the end you will have missed blessing and that in itself is the most bitter of all sorrows.”

In the Garden

Charles A. Miles, 1913, Public Domain



In the Garden. Photo by Bob Kirchman

I come to the garden alone,
While the dew is still on the roses,

*And the voice I hear falling on my ear
The Son of God discloses.*

R*efrain:*

*And He walks with me, and He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own;
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known.*

H*e speaks, and the sound of His voice*

*Is so sweet the birds hush their singing,
And the melody that He gave to me
Within my heart is ringing.*

R*efrain:*

*And He walks with me, and He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own;
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known.*

I*'d stay in the garden with Him,*

*Though the night around me be falling,
But He bids me go; through the voice of woe
His voice to me is calling.*

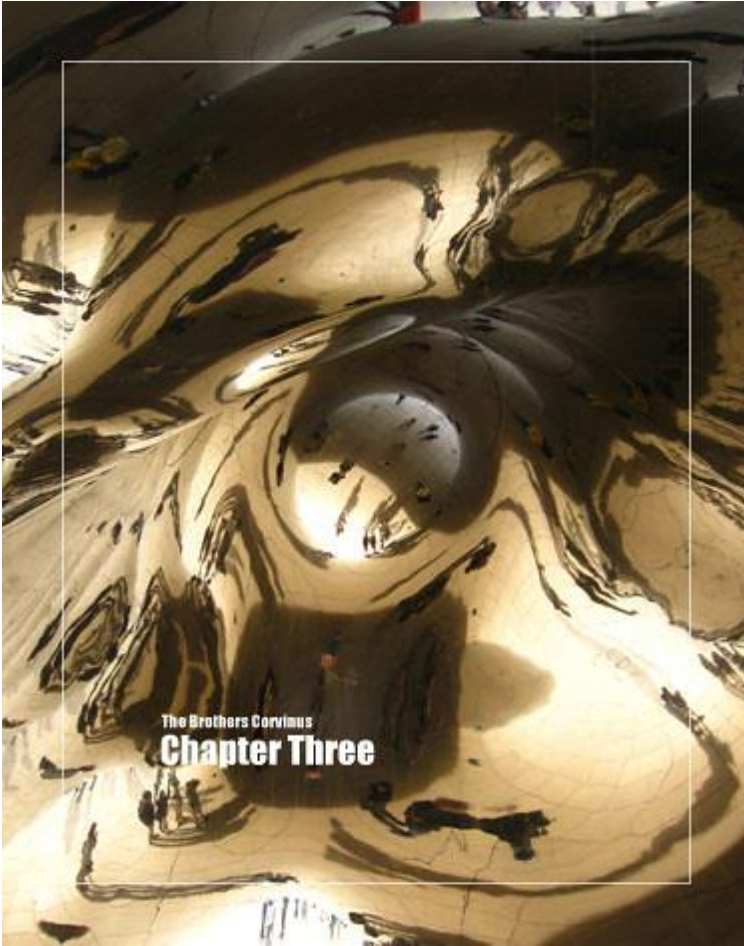
R*efrain:*

*And He walks with me, and He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own;*

*And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known.*



Oak branches in snow. Photo by Bob Kirchman



Nella fantasia io vedo un mondo giusto,

Lì tutti vivono in pace e in onestà.

Io sogno d'anime che sono sempre libere,

Come le nuvole che volano,

Pien' d'umanità in fondo all'anima.

Nella fantasia io vedo un mondo chiaro,

*Lì anche la notte è meno oscura.
Io sogno d'anime che sono sempre libere,
Come le nuvole che volano.*

N*ella fantasia esiste un vento caldo,*

*Che soffia sulle città, come amico.
Io sogno d'anime che sono sempre libere,
Come le nuvole che volano,
Pien' d'umanità in fondo all'anima.*

-- Nella Fantasia

Five hundred miles to the East, in the city of Fairgate... now renamed CORVINUS (in all capitals), another discussion of marriage was taking place. It had been a year since Alexey had BANNED it. Officials of Worldstate were forbidden to enter into marriage because Corvinus thought that it took away from their focus as officials and enforcers of the new world order. Throughout the wider Worldstate, it had been defined as pretty much anything you wanted. You could marry another of your own gender, or have multiple wives in succession. In government service however family was an unnecessary burden and after a long period of discouraging it with little effect, Corvinus simply banned it.

Younger brother, Corvinus the Prophet did his part. No marriages would be performed for Worldstate officials in the state church. This decree led to a surge in vacations to Israel, a land where the joy of the bride and bridegroom seemed to be rooted in the very fabric of the land. The state in turn restricted travel to Israel. This was a great disappointment, not only to young couples but to history buffs who wanted to see the construction progressing on the new Temple.

Indeed, Israel seemed to be one of the last societies with any of the old freedoms intact. To a lesser degree, the Siberian Autonomous Republic held on to some basic freedoms but only for its own small population. It became a carefully monitored corridor for transport but not much else.

As ‘Joe’ went out to encourage the small groups, he found himself more and more asked to perform secret weddings. This is how he came to be called ‘Valentine.’ In 278A.D. a minister of ‘The Way’ had defied a similar edict by the Roman Emperor Claudius the Cruel and was put to death for performing marriages anyway. ‘Valentine’ as ‘Joe’ came to be known, would arrive in a place to minister and often have an eager queue of couples waiting for him. Though he rejoiced in this new office, he secretly wished on more than one occasion that he could simply be the groom!

The work of the Eternal Kingdom, however, left little time for socialization. How ‘Valentine’ missed the walks in the gardens of Big Diomedea and the stories of Mrs. Greene and ‘Queen Lucy!’ He reassured himself that it was a noble thing to give this gift to others... but still his heart ached. Hidden in plain sight, he walked across the great bridge across the Tanana River in CORVINUS one day, surrounded by bustling officious souls, but quite alone. He was the only one to notice.

She stood on a railing of the bridge, hidden from casual gazes by the gargantuan light fixture she clung to... watching the icy river flow beneath her. She was a young government official, but she had entered into this life wearing rose colored glasses. Now, after seeing her ‘liberated’ state as nothing more than a dull and endless servitude, she had been cast aside by her last lover, a mid-level Corvinus

enforcement chief. Though she wore the close-cropped hair and the genderless garments of a Worldstate official, her heart still stirred within her. Of late she had given up the drugs... she suspected there was another life within her and some maternal instinct drove her to do that.

The new clarity of mind that resulted from her decision was simply more than she was ready for. She could not simply present herself at the state health clinic to have her problem ‘dealt with,’ yet she saw no way to continue. She had found a copy of ‘Notes to Priscilla and Aquilla’ and tried to read it but her Worldstate conditioned mind solidly resisted. It was best, she thought, to end it all. Life was short and meaningless anyway. Surely this was for the best.

Valentine’ resisted the urge to climb up there with her. He was already known on Big Diomedes for being ‘the reckless one.’ Staying hidden in plain sight was an art form and ‘Valentine’ was way too careless at it. Official Worldstate policy was that suicide was a noble act as you were stepping out of the way of others who needed the world’s limited resources. Society seemed to have lost the lessons learned in the great farms of the tundra. In the end, ‘Valentine’ was won by the core of his mission, that “Not any should perish!” He quietly climbed up with her.

After what seemed an awkward eternity, the two slipped down into the plodding crowd on the bridge. Most walked head down and if anyone saw them they probably assumed them to be complicit in a lovers’ suicide pact anyway... best for such to go ahead and jump in the river. But no one seemed to notice that they didn’t jump and slipped back into the throng. “Oh well, they’ll probably go through with it on another day.”

There was a little park on the riverbank and the two made their way to a place that was quite alone. The sound of the river made monitoring difficult here and the two talked. ‘Valentine’ was amazingly able to answer her questions. Her name was Claudia and she had come to CORVINUS to pursue her career. She was from Iowa in the ‘Lower 48’ originally, the child of hard working farmers who had tried to instill in her a sense of family. At her young age she had rebelled against their ‘archaic’ ways and their beliefs, but now she had been able to compare and contrast. Though her parents had been taken by the disappearances, it was they and not Worldstate who spoke clearest to her!

And Claudia gave herself to becoming a disciple of ‘The Way.’

Valentine’ met with the leaders of the church in CORVINUS. Surely it was best that Claudia disappear from the city because of her high profile. There was not much time to think about it but ‘Valentine’ and his partner in ministry were now scheduled to leave in a sealed freight container. They would head East into Canadian territory before obtaining a similar ride to Big Diomedes. Claudia begged for a way out of CORVINUS and in the end, the two decided to include her in their cramped quarters. About a week later Claudia, blindfolded, was escorted by ‘Ransom’ through the tunnel into the biosphere.

Valentine’ took a brief rest and was gone again to encourage people someplace in the world, but Claudia became one of ‘The More Perfect Way’s’ greatest students. One day, some months later, she sat at a mirror in the ‘Northern Lights’ studio releasing her now lengthening hair. She rejoiced in remembering how it had cascaded to her

shoulders in her Iowa youth and knew it would one day caress her shoulders once more. Her changing profile drove her to Mrs. Greene's studio on a fairly regular basis now as she needed to find... in every sense of the word... a more expanded wardrobe. "How wonderful!" she thought, "to have a clothing line right here under the dormitory!" She jumped as Mrs. Kinsinger, the older lady 'Ransom' had brought to Big Diomede as her mentor, stepped into the room. She fumbled rapidly, attempting to place her hair back into the 'Worldstate bun' that her station outside the biosphere required, but she failed and gave a little groan. Kinsinger smiled and stroked the fallen hair gently.

Is it wrong of me to think so much of 'Joe,' er, 'Valentine?'" she lamented. For indeed she had been caught in the act of 'being feminine,' a practice Worldstate did not, for its part, want to encourage. Here in the biosphere, Mama Greene's rule superceded. Indeed femininity was a noble and good thing to be cherished. Greene's influence was fondly and reverently remembered.

Kinsinger smiled, for she had seen all the signs of this coming.

Everyone in the biosphere could, even 'Ransom.' "'Joe' has spent a lot more time on the road lately. In fact 'Ransom' is about to force him to take a sabbatical! He pretends not to notice you, but every little handwritten note you give him he cherishes. Notice how quickly he responds in kind. I can assure you he is asking 'Ransom' the same sort of questions with which you pummel me! The Divine has His paints out, dear sister, and he loves to paint!"

Indeed, 'Joe' was on a mission to the Middle-East and was about to return in the next few days. Claudia was running out of the little notes in envelopes that he always left, ostensibly to 'encourage' her, but that always seemed to be in adequate supply for a 'daily letter' from a man

who could use no public form of messaging.

We need to pray ‘Joe’ will have his ‘Stone Mountain Moment,’”

Mrs. Kinsinger continued, referring to the storm on the great mountain in which the hard man who had built the great bridge proposed to his own dear wife. The story was part of the legend of the biosphere along with the mountain walk in which the Greenes became a couple. The Greenes, to their credit, had not required thunder and lightning! ‘Joe’ was a man focused on his mission. Some pyrotechnics might need to be employed.

Joe’s’ return to the biosphere came as expected, but instead of a casual conversation, he retired to his room without speaking to anyone. Claudia’s heart fell. Returning to her room, she saw the little envelope. In it was a simple invitation from ‘Joe:’ “Will you join me for dinner in the old president’s office?” was the only message. There was plenty of time provided to “pretty up” and Claudia shamelessly ransacked the ‘Northern Lights’ collection in the process. Two hours later she arrived at the paneled room that had been Jonathan Greene’s office and study. A fire blazed in the fireplace as ‘Joe’ met her, dressed in his finest dinner clothes. He had prepared the meal himself and seated her, serving the soup course and then he took his place.

Joe’ did not hesitate, but spoke from his heart. The dinner and conversation lasted long into the night. The ‘long distance relationship’ that ‘Joe’ had contrived really left little to be said in words, but much to be said by the eyes and the tender touch of a hand upon a hand. ‘Joe’ was indeed taking an extended sabbatical. He needed to put down in writing some of what he was teaching to the

various groups. More importantly, he said: “I need to learn how to be a father.”

In the days that followed, Claudia found herself taking dictation and smoothing ‘Joe’s’ manuscripts. He was a hard but kind taskmaster and the two grew closer. One day he surprised her by insisting that they take a little break and walk in the tundra flowers. Though a storm rumbled in the distance it was a strangely warm and calm day and the sunlight played brilliantly off of the verdant summer hillside. ‘Joe’ pulled a little box from his pocket... he wanted to do this a little more stylishly than Zimmerman...

Though there was at the time no one who knew how to play the old pipe organ in the stone chapel, ‘Ransom’ found some old computer files where Greene had made midis of his playing the organ. They were sometimes accompanied by him and his wife singing duets and the combination of high quality voice rendition and the signal playing the actual organ made for a rich combination. There was not a dry eye in the little chapel as ‘Joe’ and Claudia became one. The music files were an added blessing as they had been forgotten for some time. It was as if the Greenses had returned from Heaven to bless the festivities.

Mrs. Greene and her husbands’ beautiful voices joined in the beautiful old song:

*In my fantasy I see a just world,
Where everyone lives in peace and honesty.
I dream of souls that are always free
Like the clouds that float
Full of humanity in the depths of the soul.*

In my fantasy I see a bright world

*Where each night there is less darkness.
I dream of spirits that are always free,
Like the clouds that float*

In my fantasy exists a warm wind,

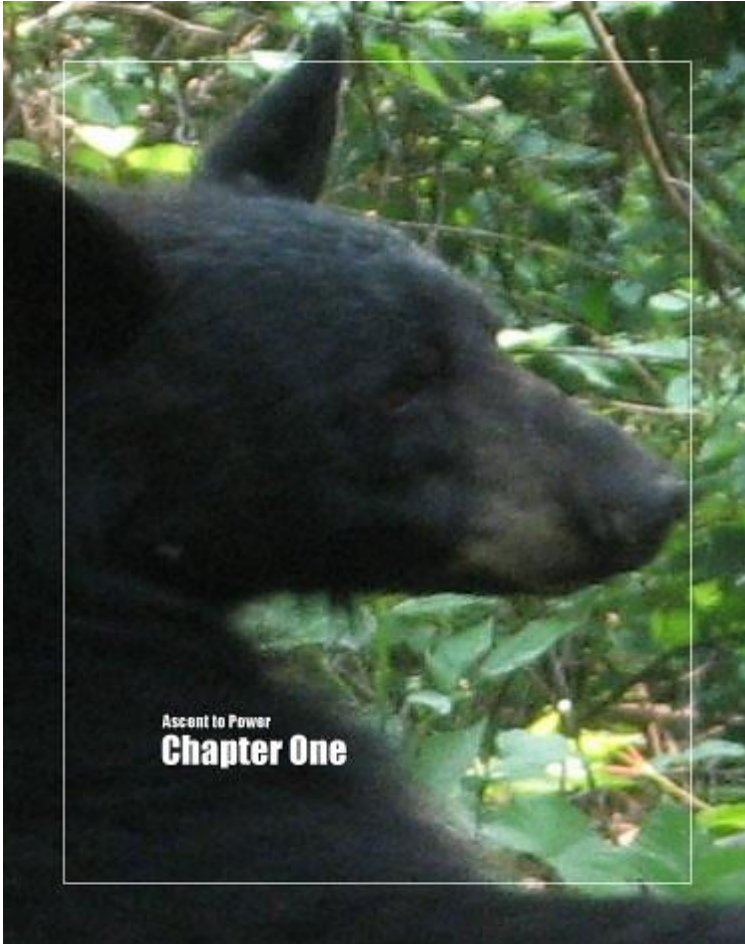
*That blows into the city, like a friend.
I dream of souls that are always free,
Like the clouds that float
Full of humanity in the depths of the soul.*

The ceremony was beautiful and required many tissues. When it was over the couple had another surprise awaiting them. ‘Ransom’ knew that the young couple needed better accommodations than those provided by the dormitory houses but didn’t want to relegate them to the untended housing stock in the biosphere outside the college grounds. He wrestled with this for some time, not wanting to disturb or rekindle sacred memories, but in the end he and Mrs. Kinsinger lovingly cleaned and dusted the old parsonage and on the wedding day its lights blazed once more.

They named their daughter Lucy and once more the little biosphere had a queen!



Kris' house on Big Diomedede. Graphic by Bob Kirchman



P *People who inspire others are those who see invisible bridges at the end of dead-end streets.* – Charles R. Swindoll

It was an unseasonably beautiful day in early June and the biosphere was opened up to allow the sweet breeze to flow through it. The few remaining residents took the opportunity to wander out and enjoy the blooming tundra. Mister Bultitude had usually stayed in the company

but now the old bear lifted his nose. There was change in the air and he started to wander. He somehow found himself walking toward the bridge. The older East-bound section had been closed indefinitely for extensive maintenance but there were no funds so it was simply closed. Power to the security cameras was even turned off. In any case it was not until a toll collector reported a bear wandering up the side of Cape Mountain that anyone saw him at all.

Ransom,' who did not like confining the great bear, was concerned when he went missing but there was no way everyone could spread out looking for him. A bear doing pretty much anything in Alaska draws little or no suspicion. Humans in a line searching for him would. When the report came over bridge communication channels, 'Ransom' smiled. "Perhaps the old boy will follow in the footsteps of his namesake. Perhaps Worldstate is beginning to unravel." 'Joe' was from Virginia, where there are plenty of wild bears. "Its JUNE, perhaps he'll be like his namesake and find himself a lady bear!"

Ransom' and 'Joe' walked the blooming hillside in the soft breeze.

"I wish the great men and women were still with us." Said 'Joe.'
"Claudia and I feel so... INADEQUATE... if you know what I mean. Not at all like Dr. Greene... I mean, the torch has been passed to us of necessity but it seems sometimes that we walk in the shadow of giants... you know, we can NEVER be like them!"

We all feel that way," 'Ransom' shot back, "but take the Greenses for example. I KNEW them... LOVED them. I need to tell you the story of their story. Zimmerman's daughter Elizabeth hired a writer to come up here and write the story of the great bridge. When the manuscript was presented to her she shared it with the Greenses and her Father, the force behind the bridge. Mrs. Greene read her part of the story

and didn't say anything. Elizabeth was a close friend of Mrs. Greene and pressed her for her opinion anyway.

He made my character 'TOO PERFECT' the Pastor's wife lamented.

I'd really like to PULVERIZE him. He simply didn't get it!"

Ransom' continued; "You see, when the Greenes arrived on Big Diomedes they were young and I think... kind of SCARED. They'd Pastored a church in the 'lower 48' and it was quite discouraging. I think they were ready to quit but Zimmerman was concerned that his bridge was developing a very unhealthy culture around itself. He knew some history so he decided to infuse some positive influence up here.

So the Greenes decided to give it one more try, but they came up here to a raw construction site. Everyone was of the tough rugged individualist school and they never darkened the door of the church. Mrs. Greene was quite lonely and she would tell you that she had pretty much screamed at the top of her lungs one day that if nothing changed she was headed back to Virginia, where she came from.

But her pain became a portal. As she saw her house rise from the muddy ground inside the biosphere, she looked to the bustling service plaza and saw the loneliness of the ladies working there. She took a job there and befriended a lot of them. She listened to their stories and led many of them to see new hope for their lives. Then she saw the vile trade in human servitude that went on in this lawless frontier and she devised a way to lead some of those girls out of it and into a new life. She had quite a bit of design talent which inspired her to create the little shops under the dormitory. Here the girls created

fashions as they allowed the Divine to recreate their very lives.

Compressed into a story it seems so wondrous and complete, but there were missteps and numerous disappointments. Many people didn't understand her and derided the work she did. That's hard to believe now but read the full volumes of any history and you'll find this true. Being a pioneer generally means you will be lonely and misunderstood at times. Perseverance is a wondrous thing, really, and most real success and innovation is simply believing in your mission and staying true to it... even as you walk alone.

By the time Big Diomedea became a tourist stop she had many ladies around her who out of their own changed lives were helping her with the open air Bible lessons she taught. But I don't think anyone really knows how much perseverance it took to get to that point.

She even thought about those of us who would follow her, and rumor has it she painted a little mural somewhere in the parsonage for its next occupants. Have you, perchance, found it... or is that just one of the stories that has grown up around her?" 'Joe' shook his head. "You would think with a four-year old in the house we would have scoped out everything."

A few days later, 'Joe' walked into the old parsonage to find his wife in a bit of a panic; "Have you seen Lucy?" she asked, "She's been gone for about forty minutes. I was busy with some baking and then I realized she wasn't in the house!" "Have you searched?" 'Joe' said in reply. "Of course! I have looked through the whole house, starting with the closets!" "Well," said 'Joe,' I think it is time we think like a

four-year old and search again.” They made their way through the house once more and when they got to the little attic bedroom they paused. Here in the half-wall paneling a piece was pushed slightly askew. Claudia crept closer. There was a small shaft of light coming from the crack.

She and ‘Joe’ looked in with amazement. Here was a simple closet in an eave space, but it created a child-sized place. Lucy was talking. They wanted to listen in. “We knew the story,” Claudia whispered, “but I wondered why we never found it.” Lucy sat in the small lighted closet with her stuffed animal ‘lurvies’ in front of a painting. It was a small mural but it filled the back of the closet. “We never found it because we never thought as a child!” Here in what had been, obviously, the first Queen Lucy’s bedroom was a mural that was really more of a magical portal for it depicted the world of C. S. Lewis’s Narnia!

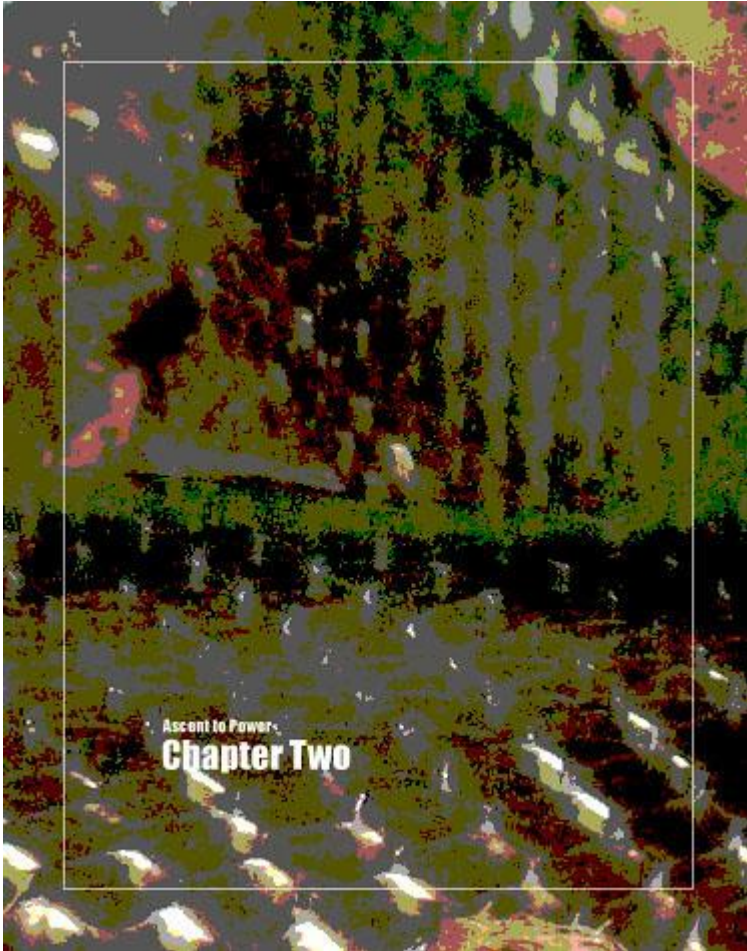
Surveying all, from the clouds at the top of the painting was the majestic Lion, Aslan! There was the great sea, the Dawn Treader making sail and Cair Paravel. Here were green hills and majestic mountains and in the foreground four children greeted a faun carrying an umbrella and a parcel under a street lamp in a snowy wood. “So, Kris Greene really DID leave a painting in the house!” Claudia said softly. “We knew she painted ‘The School of Athens’ at the college but we just sort of forgot about the other story.”

One can only imagine Kris’ little daughter playing here for hours, just like Lucy is doing. It is remarkable! How fortunate is any little girl who is so blessed!” Indeed, Lucy would now spend hours here with her stuffed ‘lurvies,’ taking them with her into this magical world where animals talked.

Kris had other young mothers in the old biosphere,” Claudia said to ‘Joe’ one day. “Lucy needs other children.” Indeed ‘Joe’ was beginning to sense that portals, when you found them, were not something to be guarded, but were meant to be walked through. He and ‘Ransom’ talked about this quite a bit now as it turned out.

Mátyás Corvinus was growing restless too. He had gone out some to encourage the groups but cautiously. It was pretty well established that his status as ‘missing’ was preventing a wholesale crackdown on the followers of ‘The Way.’ “Mátyás, you can do the most good here by taking my place. I am not well. My old life weighs in heavily upon me now and I do not know how long I shall be in this world. I am ready to step into Eternity... dare I say that I am quite looking forward to it! But I do think you most important in what you are doing here. Please, in any case, consider it.”

Mátyás thought of his two brothers. He WANTED them to know the peace he had found, but saw the greater good to be had as he remained hidden. Somehow he had the feeling he would have to confront them, but for now there was a great work to be done right where he was. He smiled as he allowed himself to be overtaken by contentment. The evening sun cast a golden light through the dome and the trees and walls glowed with its warmth. The little horses grazed on the college green. Little Lucy skipped out onto the green from her front door, having just returned from Narnia in time for dinner! Her parents followed her out the door and each took one of her hands as together they walked to the refectory.



He alone, who owns the youth, gains the future. Make the lie big, make it simple, keep saying it, and eventually they will believe it. The victor will never be asked if he told the truth.

-- Adolph Hitler (שְׁמוֹר יְמוֹת)

Ransom' was dying. He stood on the green of the college looking

across time. It had been almost seven years since the disappearances and he had seen a small but dedicated students come through the institution and then go out to change the world. The latest to depart had been 'Joe' and Claudia, who left to pastor a group of Lakota in the 'Lower 48.' Claudia was part Lakota herself, so this was for her a return to her roots.

Joe' had finished his sabbatical year and then become a teacher for a while as their daughter Lucy grew into a young girl. Now she would have playmates and adventures under the open sky. Mrs. Kinsinger went with them, as a mentor and a 'grandmother' to Lucy. 'Ransom' lovingly closed up the little parsonage house.

There was never any thought of him moving into the place, for 'Ransom' it held too many ghosts. Memories flooded the old man every time he walked past it... happy dinners with laughing children present... Macaroni and cheese, and wonderful conversation centered on the Magnificent One and His work! He was often seen walking among the hollyhocks now. The little garden refreshed the old man's spirit.

He longed to go out once more to encourage the groups. Perhaps he would even pop in on 'Joe' and Claudia... no, too risky. He would not endanger their little family as there was always the possibility he would come followed by unwelcome guests!

The Way' was more centered in Jerusalem now, for Israel still stubbornly resisted the one world government and the one world church, holding fast to a long-standing policy of religious freedom. The groups in CORVINUS, the capital of the world, were

unfortunately, to put it mildly, a mess. CORVINUS was a city where not to aspire to power was a great sin and a lot of the city's raw ambition and cunning were finding their way into the groups. A simple refresher course in the Gifts and Fruits of the Spirit seemed in order. That is why 'Ransom' found himself in the bustling city once more.

He had followed the usual circuitous path of travel into the city so as not to allow tracing to Big Diomede but as he presented himself to the oldest group in CORVINUS he realized the trap. Inquiring about old friends there he learned that all had come to some sort of unfortunate end. The people he spoke with now were unfortunately untrained in the basic truths of 'The Way.' Not only that, they seemed all too integrated with the decadent culture around them... flowing all too freely in and out of it.

Staying there for a time, he tried to rekindle the fire of interest in spiritual things. The talks in the groups were now more about tolerance for different lifestyles and the need to unite with the Worldstate religion. Too late he realized that he was simply a dangerous element that his present hosts would have to dispose of.

He was placed under house arrest and though he could have visitors he was no longer free to come and go. He had learned the old texts well enough that this came as no surprise to him. Younger members of the groups came quietly to the house and seemed truly eager to learn the Way of the Spirit, but the established leadership of the group now shunned him.

One day he answered his door to find armed 'enforcers' there. He

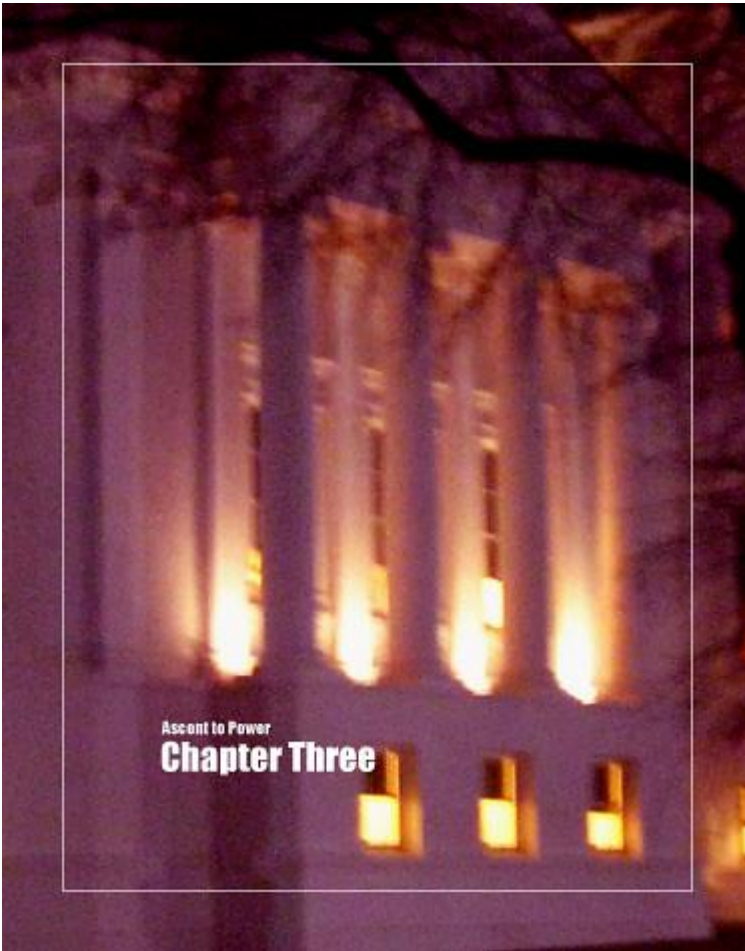
was walked through the streets of CORVINUS in their custody. He noticed the cranes as the beautiful Alaskan capital was being fundamentally transformed now. Gargantuan skyscrapers and domes were taking shape around huge paved plazas that had been freshly slashed through the gentle city's fabric. The designs seemed eerily taken from Albert Speer's remaking of Berlin in the Twentieth Century. The result was brutally ugly.

Escorted through an oversized doorway into a disturbingly scaled hall, 'Ransom' found himself standing before Emperor Alexey Corvinus.

The interrogation was long and unpleasant. The Emperor wanted to know of his brother, of course, and secondly any information that might be used to suppress 'The Way.' 'Ransom' was tight-lipped and stiffened as Corvinus slapped him and threatened more severe punishment. Corvinus realized this was a man who would not give him the information he wanted... even as he was tortured to the point of death, so he chose to make him a public example.

The most severe punishment in Worldstate was beheading by the enforcers, but CORVINUS now saw himself as the leader of a revived Roman Empire. His younger brother had indeed installed him as a god in the minds of many in the inner circle. Soon the world would cast off all archaic entanglements and stand poised to enter a new millennium of progress. This great leap required the severance of old ties. No, beheading was not enough here. Roman history provided an even crueler and more public form of disposing with enemies of the state. 'Ransom' would be the first to taste it as it was reinstated in CORVINUS!





Arm yourselves, and be ye men of valour, and be in readiness for the conflict; for it is better for us to perish in battle than to look upon the outrage of our nation and our altar. As the Will of G-d is in Heaven, even so let it be." -- 1 Maccabees 3:58–60, as quoted in a speech by Sir Winston Churchill

Mátyás Corvinus walked on alone to meet his brothers. He was

wearing the purple cloak of a Worldstate ruler and had donned the official sword in its scabbard that signified his status. He walked alone out on the great bridge. The Eastbound span between the islands was showing its age and had been closed indefinitely for 'repairs.' There was no money for repairs so the older bridge and its memorial chapel remained abandoned. Here the ashes of the visionary who built the bridge and his wife were interred and the lives of everyone who had died on the bridge or its approach roads were remembered.

The chapel's glass pipe organ was silent. No one had played it since Pastor Greene's disappearance and this beautiful instrument was all but forgotten as well, for those who loved it were gone. Corvinus walked past the silent memorial and wondered at the genius necessary to join continents. Assembling the people of the world under 'one' government seemed cheap in comparison. As Corvinus had learned the rich stories surrounding the family that built the bridge, he wondered at miracles like inspiring Granddaughters. He thought much less now of rule by intimidation.

He walked alone across the suspension span past the chapel.

Descending toward the International Dateline he saw two figures, clothed as he was, alone as they walked toward the line from Little Diomedes. The three men greeted each other at the line that marked the 'end of the world.' Mátyás stared at his brothers, standing firmly in yesterday as they in turn stared at him, standing in the day to come. Alexey spoke first: "Hello Brother," he spoke in greeting.

You have joined 'The Way,'" spoke the youngest brother, the spiritual leader of Worldstate. "You know the punishment for doing so, for you have administered it enough times. Prepare to die, for there is no Divine who can save you!"

Three cloaked figures drew their swords on a darkened bridge.

Alexey set into his brother, cautiously at first, remembering that Mátyás had always been the superior fencer in their youth together. As they parried, Mátyás said: "It is true that I have found 'the more perfect way.' We have only ruled because the Divine permitted it, and that to an end that He has determined." Alexey attacked harder with the sword. The youngest Corvinus stood back both in courtesy and as a 'spiritual' man. He would not fight.

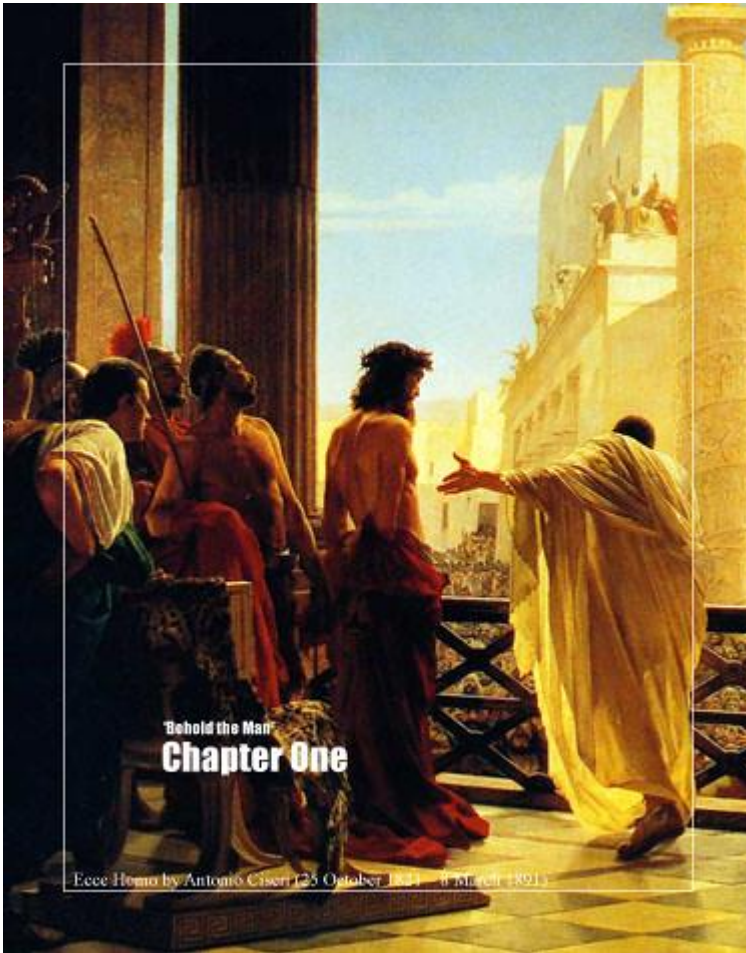
Blades flashed, moves remembered from childhood were reenacted on the bridge across days. A fast step here, a thrust there. A leap to the wall and a surprise repositioning... a parry... a deadly thrust and death narrowly averted. "You are rusty, my brother," Alexey gasped, as he overexerted himself to meet his brother's strength. Mátyás countered with his own swordplay but spoke to his brothers of the promises of the Divine. His mission was not to kill or survive now, but to bring Redemption to his siblings. They appeared to halt and take it in for a moment here and there, but all too quickly they caught themselves. The battle raged on!

Then there was the moment. Alexey and the youngest brother in unison shouted: ***"WE REJECT YOUR SO-CALLED DIVINE!"*** ***"We want NOTHING to do with this 'Grace' you claim to offer. We will be DAMNED before we bow our knee to this G-d!"*** And so, the brothers Corvinus unwittingly spoke prophetically of their own end.

Mátyás Corvinus raised his sword straight into the sky, held by both hands, and closed his eyes in the manner of a warrior standing

victorious in the face of his own certain death. "Into Your hands I commit my spirit," he whispered as Alexey's swift blade found its mark. The blood of the man who in his own strength and cunning once sought to change the world now ran freely onto the pavement and flowed into today and tomorrow. Too late, the brothers Corvinus would see it joined with the blood of another that flowed into all time.





Battle in the Heavens

In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.

Iate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel;

Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz:

His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.

And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.

Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.

And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands.

And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.

Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days.

And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face

toward the ground, and I became dumb.

A*nd, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength.*

F*or how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me.*

T*hen there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me,*

A*nd said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me.*

T*hen said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.*

B*ut I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince. -- Daniel 10*

The Eagle is right,” said the Lord Digory. “The Narnia you’re thinking of . . . was only a shadow or a copy of the real Narnia, which has always been here and always will be here: just as our own world, England and all, is only a shadow or copy of something in Aslan’s real world. You need not mourn over Narnia, Lucy. All of the old Narnia that mattered, all the dear creatures, have been drawn into the real Narnia through the Door. And of course it is different; as different as a real thing is from a shadow or as waking life is from a dream.” . . . The new [Narnia] was a deeper country: every rock and flower and blade of grass looked as if it meant more. I can’t describe it any better than that: if you ever get there, you will know what I mean. It was the Unicorn who summed up what everyone was feeling. He . . . cried: “I have come home at last! This is my real country! I belong here. This is the land I have been looking for all my life, though I never knew it till now. The reason why we loved the old Narnia is that it sometimes looked a little like this.” -- C. S. Lewis, *The Last Battle*

Mátyás Corvinus stood before the Master by a still pool. The Master patted the nose of his faithful white horse, his companion in battle and now in Eternal rule. There was peace at last. Indeed those assembled before the Magnificent One had seen much service. They, to a man, would have laughed at the notion so popularized in cartoons of Heaven’s inhabitants idly sitting on clouds and playing harps. Even the very young were engaged in adventures! Little Lucy had stepped into this magical world and joined hands with Kris’ daughter. It was like they were finally able to step into the painting that they both loved and off they went to pat the noses of magical creatures. The colors were more vivid than Lucy remembered in the little painting and it seemed that your eyes were now able to see

more colors (which indeed they were).

Claudia and Kris followed after their children. It was the best play date ever and there was apparently no time limit. Joe, the old trucker, watched as his beloved granddaughter Kate joined in and then he shook off his adult sensibilities and joined in too! He and Willa even rolled happily down a green hill together. Their love for each other, like the colors of this place, had grown so much deeper! The world was what it should be! The great warriors rejoiced at the restored wonder of all creation! Mátyás Corvinus stood shoulder to shoulder with people like Paul the Apostle, Deborah and contemporaries such as Rupert Zimmerman and the Greenes. Their stories intermingled in the winning of the great war... the war for the destiny of mankind!

Yes, the battle had been won decisively in the Master's Death and Resurrection, but indeed the battle had raged on as Darkness slowly was pushed back and the Nations were taken for the Kingdom of Righteousness. In human time, a Millennium had passed. In Eternity, one saw finally the scope of the Divine's work in history and none of the descriptions or arguments one finds in human writings did it justice. Evil had been banished to the Lake of Fire!

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for

the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. --
Hebrews 12:1-3

Here were the 'Great Cloud of Witnesses.' Many were recognizable from Hebrews 11, the hall of Faith, but there were many more added to their number as well. The man Mátyás Corvinus had known as 'Ransom' stood in their company. He was surrounded by many who were part of the Great Story.

A great war that had raged for centuries was now done. Now the great stories became part of the record of Eternal history. The blood and stench of death were gone, but the heroic acts could now be celebrated and remembered. All listened intently to hear the Master's "Well Done, Good and Faithful Servant!" Since Eternity has no limits but books theirs, we can but share a few of the highlights.

The Smiling Boy

There was a wild young man in Seoul, Korea once. His name was Lee Jong-Rak. [1.] He had to flee his rural village because of his wild reputation, but he was apprehended by Divine love and became a follower of the way. Eventually he became a Pastor. He and his wife had a daughter, then a son. The boy was one who you would call

severely disabled. His mind never developed and he required constant care. The young Pastor became involved in the routine, clearing his breathing passage and tenderly working with his disabled child. Though there was no hope given by the doctors that he would get any response, eventually the boy learned to smile! The learning of how to smile was quite heroic, and the Master's smile was seen at the telling.

But there is more. The young boy became a man. He never was able to rise from his bed, but his smile inspired this little Pastor to become a rescuer of abandoned babies. In that society, so obsessed with performance and perfection, Mothers of handicapped babies would sometimes simply leave their babies in the streets to die. Pastor, who had been taught by his son to see *IMAGO DEI* rescued thousands of them, adopting some of the most severe himself.

One of his young charges, abandoned because he was missing some fingers, became a leader in his school. Eventually he became the leader of Korea and he brought about much needed reform and his life inspired a revival of Faith in the Korean people. He bravely took up the cause of the Christians persecuted in the North and his relentless advocacy eventually resulted in the reunification of his country.

In the earliest days of the Christian church, child abandonment was a problem too. Unwanted children were simply cast into the Tiber River in ancient Rome. Understanding the preciousness of human life, the Faithful pulled as many of these young souls as they could from the water and raised them as their own. Pastor Lee Jong-Rak's story was added to thousands more, each of them celebrating the Truth that man is created in the image of G-d according to the Holy Scriptures. Each life is precious. Pastor Lee's son was a teacher of that truth!

The Faithful Mothers

Susanna Wesley was one of 25 children, but she and her husband Samuel had nineteen! Though only eight of them would outlive her, Mrs. Wesley's influence she invested her life in each child and they in turn would bless the world. Her husband left her, but she continued to care for her children and was their main educator. She wrote to her husband:

I am a woman, but I am also the mistress of a large family. And though the superior charge of the souls contained in it lies upon you, yet in your long absence I cannot but look upon every soul you leave under my charge as a talent committed to me under a trust. I am not a man nor a minister, yet as a mother and a mistress I felt I ought to do more than I had yet done. I resolved to begin with my own children; in which I observe the following method: I take such a proportion of time as I can spare every night to discourse with each child apart. On Monday I talk with Molly, on Tuesday with Hetty, Wednesday with Nancy, Thursday with Jacky, Friday with Patty, Saturday with Charles."

Her house burned down and she had to send her children away for a time. Her husband was often gone. Though he returned after the initial dispute. She, out of her own devotion to her Creator, began to host Sunday afternoon meetings and was much like the Biblical Priscilla. She wrote extended commentaries on the Apostles Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. Human history remembers her sons John and Charles, but here in the halls of Faith, a remembrance is made to a Faithful Mother!

Many more Faithful Mothers' stories were told and remembered. Now their many tears were turned to precious jewels! Their crowns were radiant with the light from them.

The Unseen Encouragers

Then the Master recounted the stories of those who saw and encouraged those around them. These were the stories that often went untold but one must indeed remember that they are foundations to the stories that are told! Here Mátyás would meet the Greenes and 'Queen Lucy' as they stood together with their old friend 'Ransom.' Indeed they shared in the work of encouraging those in their company. Mátyás still wondered when the stories of great battles and mighty kings would be told. To be sure, their stories intermingled with the Great Story too.

The Mighty Warriors

His attention was fixed on the Master as The Magnificent One began to tell the stories of those who were considered mighty in battle in His Kingdom. Tiny ladies who prayed in obscurity more often than not, THEY were the force that brought focus to the work of the Divine Spirit. In human history few knew their names but in the Great Story each became a beautiful chapter. Their fellow warriors were the mighty servants of the Master and Mátyás saw how those considered 'powerful' in the old world were often nothing more than a tool in the hand of the Master, while such obscure Saints enjoyed true freedom

and significance.

Mátyás was thankful that he had discovered this great truth in time and had entered the Great Story as well. Now he saw the company of the Martyrs, those who had chosen death rather than deny the Great Master. There was Stephen and Paul, along with Abdul the Turk and his family. [2.] There were many who had been cruelly murdered by 'the enforcers.' Some were victims of Mátyás' own decree, yet they were now joined with him in admiration of the Magnificent One.

The only signs of the great battle that remained, however, were the scarred hands and feet of the Master. Heaven had reached down in Selfless Love to rescue humankind. Now the choirs of Heaven sang of His mighty and brave adventure. The Story stirred the entire being!, but now it was time to enter into the Great Story of Eternity! Eternity had written itself on every heart present and all eyes looked up to Eternity's Golden Light!



One often wondered what you remembered in Heaven and what you forgot. Now it was clear that knowledge had only GROWN. Knowledge of the Magnificent One filled places in your being that you didn't know needed to be filled. Indeed one could remember as but a cloudy dream, things from the past. Earth had been remade in a fiery rebirth. One knew that, but it was rather like the time Rupert Zimmerman (builder of the great bridge) had read the words 'Citizen, Soldier, Educator' on that statue in a college quadrangle. The man so

referenced had also lost a leg in battle, but here on the quadrangle there was no smoke, no pain, no blood, only the peaceful light through the trees and the memory of a life that had been lived... no man's life is totally well-lived, but that is the part that remains vivid in the memory. In fact, Mátyás saw this man and Rupert Zimmerman, warrior and bridge builder, strolling together in a deep and animated discussion. Here were two old soldiers who had ultimately found themselves participants in a greater battle... that for the rescue of humankind by the Master.

History was remembered, but the Master of History had made it His Story. There were indeed some who were not here that one had known in the Old Earth. Their lives were not forgotten, but they were remembered in the context of the Magnificent One's patience, "**Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.**" Indeed, one was aware of how the Magnificent One had wooed them. The Magnificent One wiped away tears; and His presence so filled you, that somehow you were made whole.

But now something new was about to happen. "**Come!**" said the voice Mátyás had first heard speak to his heart on the tarmac in Syria. Now on the Hillsides of a New Earth, all were gathered as the Great Jerusalem came down to join the Earth... "**as a bride adorned for her Husband.**"

Behold, I make all things new."

Now that light that had first filtered through the trees was seen to have its origin from within the Great Jerusalem that descended. If you think of the finest feast of celebration you have ever enjoyed, the

best family or church picnic on a beautiful day; you will come closer, but nowhere close to the feeling of this time when mankind sat down to enjoy a shared meal with the Magnificent One at the end of the world... or was this the BEGINNING?, yes, I believe that is a more truthful observation; and that, dear reader, is the one I will leave you with



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