

A Short Prejudiced History

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In the beginning, humans were created, and then humans created the criteria for being human. In the beginning, such criteria were simple, so simple that criteria were not important. When no person had language, humans needed no language. When no person had tools, humans needed no tools. In the beginning, the mere emergence from a woman's belly made one human.

Then, humans discovered their hands and their fingers. Subsequent discoveries led to the invention of laws, books, print, civilization, science, and attempts to control the environment.

During the interim, humans sought new understandings of themselves, their relationships with others, and with a higher being.

And all the while, criteria and new criteria were invented and stipulated, first to classify, then to separate and set aside, eventually--from time to time, later from more than time to time--to defile, to dehumanize, to murder.

People with special characteristics--the blind, the deaf, the retarded, the special for a time, or the special irrespective of time or culture--became consistent targets for those who would separate one human being from another.

And, with each separation, prophets would announce that solutions to problems were at hand. The light at the end of the tunnel would now shine brightly. Desperate and sick humans would now be saved.

The ancients had their solutions, not humane but honest and without sham. Go, mother, take your sick child to the mountaintop; there the gods will decide who should live, who should die, who will be inscribed in the Book of Life or the Book of Final Decree.

So they went, some to the mountains, and the "Hansels and Gretels" to the forest. But, our priests told us that God was not pleased. Go ye not to the mountains and the forests. Thou shalt not kill! We, the state, will take your child in our asylums. We will care for the sick, the mad, the idiot child that you have spawned and let loose in this cruel and hard world.

Give us your child to minister to.

Give us this forsaken being whom you have loved.

Give us that progeny who had no future.

God and the state will serve all beings.

And, so, they came,

From the farms and the villages,

From the great and the weak,

Innocent of the ways of priests and prophets.

And the state kept its word,

If not its faith,

Kept its covenant,

If not with God, then with the Devil.

First hundreds,

Then thousands,

Then hundreds of thousands,

Tomorrow, millions may inhabit our Hells on this earth.

Again, certain prophets told the people that the God-state was not pleased with the work of these faithful servants. We must design new homes, humane homes, small homes, regional homes, halfway homes, group homes, normalized homes, unit homes, extended care homes, but we must keep separate those who belong with us from those who do not. We must guarantee to every family who has a child with special needs that the family will be here and the child will be there. This is a Great American Dream.

In an earlier time, the state first created homes for the little children, the greenhorn children, the dirty children, and the waifs. And, the state told those greenhorn parents, "You offend us with your foreign tongues, your strange smells, and peculiar habits. Give us your children and we will melt them down and, then, remake them as Americans. But, if they do not learn our ways quickly enough, or if you refuse to encourage our ways in your houses, we will take your children. We will place them in better homes, foster homes, or orphan homes. We, the state, will try to do for your children what you could not do." And, so, the poor and immigrant were the first to be fooled and pulled and subdued. For, isn't it written in the Book that God created man and woman to multiply and subdue the earth? And isn't the state commanded to subdue all men and women?

But, what the state first created to enclose and control the poor-- what the powerful and elite created for others--now consumes those very people who designed the system. First conceived to protect people of refinement, the system now remains to imprison their descendants. Irony of ironies, the state school, and the state hospital, and Camelot--its progenitors once known as the poor house, then the county home, then the

old Folk's home, now Camelot--open their arms to the children, and grandchildren, and great grandchildren of those who began the process that led to the destruction of family life and responsibility, once the very strength of our earliest settlers.

O beautiful earth,

So green and fresh on this free morn,

O beautiful life,

What wonders you bestow on me,

O lovely sky,

Your colors make me cry,

From the pain in knowing that this will end,

That there will be a day,

When I will not see and feel your goodness,

And the greatness that made it for me to love.

O wondrous life,

This is all for me,

And I keep it away from God's other children.