

A Travel Writer Of Sorts

Mark Lee Golden Copyright 2015 markleegoldenwriter.com

Recently I looked at a few bestselling female Christian authors' websites and blogs. The content was similar and overlapping. Generic isn't the right word. Perhaps, being siblings of the same spiritual family connects literary characteristics. These artistic females all have something which I lack: a deep, emotional love of God.

Their passion is obvious. Their desire is wholesome and true. Clearly, their hearts cannot beat without knowing He is near. They have laid their lives before Him in an (outdated) foreign manner, i.e., kneeling, head bowed, and with a heart of servanthood beating within. Americans do not even show respect to our leaders by such posture. God's acceptance of these authors is the pinnacle of their existence. From this highest point, nearest to heaven, flows a naked appreciation of forgiveness, rebirth, and inclusion of a master plan. Their lives remain changed while waiting for the coming day of meeting God in His home. There, each will further pour out even more remarkable worship, thanksgiving and exuberant praise.

I like that. But, I don't have that. Never did—but someday will.

Do I feel left out? Do I ever wonder if I entered the wrong address at a building? Yes.

Some people read my commentaries and experience a fair mix of cultural entertainment under my umbrella of religious dissatisfaction. I present my grumblings in sophisticated literary ways. Others writing in the blog-o-sphere are crude, rude, use profanity and some writers—if ever given the chance—seek to knock “sweet Jesus” down with their first punch. Thinking, *Then I'll see what he's really made of.* (I don't think I'd buy a ticket to see that. But, if given a free seat, I'd check it out.)

My sincere Biblical pieces plus a published “The Ring of Torrents: A Jewish Mary” book are doctrinal and comfy. I do think that God showed up here and there to help me insert wonderful insights. Such selections have the aroma of a familiar, yet pleasing spice.

Having Jewish DNA perpetually running through my blood, I *naturally* have a problem with God. Examples in the Torah include the protests of Moses and Abraham, then in later writings of Job, Jeremiah, Habakkuk and others. Synagogue teachings utilize these dialogues concerning a world that is not as it ought to be. It's a never-ending feature in Judaism. These incidents reveal a Supreme Being who desires those who confidently object, disagree or are disillusioned, to speak up—literally upwards. Consider the patriarch Jacob's nighttime knock-down, drag out fight, complete with eye poking, nose twisting and intermittent wrestling with God's representative—which went on for hours.

Only in recent years have I understood that this grumpy streak in me is not only a Jewish trait, but one that no doubt God planted in me—not for His amusement—but rather for His desire for a different perspective, a challenge and to debate an opponent. Why? Because-He-is-like-that. In Hebrew, the word *darash* or *d'rash* has many (debated) definitions. I'm presenting here those which support me: "seek with a desire of understanding, inquire, question, to require, summon, beat a path, demand, divide."

In Jewish circles there is a common saying, "Two Jews get together to argue about something and there ends up being three opinions." Simply put: Two Jews three opinions.

Another supportive old saying: "If nine men out of ten agree, then the tenth is probably Jewish."

I don't live believing that God switched out my emotions geared-up for lively passions and put in a faith-filled creative intellect. But, *then again*...I do.

Clearly those women writers I cited have a deep well of sincere emotions to draw from. But, those valuable feelings also merge with faith-filled creative intellects, and so, I continually see that breed surge past me. Does that mean I'm limping toward the desired dazzling city set on a hill? Yes, but, sort of no. From what I know, I'm taking a longer and lonelier road there—and that is what I'm to do. It makes me me. Because of this, I see things differently and ponder differently. I'm off to the side and out of the common/traditional way. Yes, some evenings I can faintly hear in the distance the bustle of the "happy bus" bouncing down the road and winding curves.

But, God visits in the rough hills where I trod. I've found He likes to arm wrestle. Of course, the Supreme Being doesn't ever pretend to lose or almost lose. Such patronizing maneuvering is above Him (no pun intended), benefiting neither of us. He always wins, though He's not in hurry and rarely uses the same strategy. Okay, He does use some strategies over and over again. His willingness to wrestle is empowering. He can make the weak stronger and the even strongest pessimist grudgingly plant seeds of optimism. (Watering and tending is a separate issue.)

In conclusion, I've seen the God lovers' enthusiasm knit themselves together at times in childlike and strange, almost tribal ways. But, such whoop-it-up activities turn most people away; inspire a few—making fresh the stale, and create theological or faithless critics known as enemies, despise them.

In comparison, consider Americans' love of live sporting events, evidenced by multitudes of fans. They change their wardrobe for the game. They get caught up in emotional highs and lows (winning and losing) producing, shouting, wild applause and a whole lotta

waving noisy silly stuff. The same people at church? At synagogue? That's makes people uncomfortable. Why? Well, when there is little live action to watch, or when replay shots of the main players are centuries old, and any newish stories are from elsewhere, it's not the same atmosphere. Also, to our Western intellects, the strategy of using invisibility tends to be a foul, not counted as a point or court advantage.

These Things Make Me Grumpy...