

Weathering the Weather

When a thunderstorm on a hot summer day moved across Iowa my daughters and I would go outside and watch the turbulence as it developed; that was more satisfying than being petrified with fear. One thing Jesus couldn't stand was dull-witted Scribes and Pharisees who didn't have a clue about the *signs of the times*. "You big dummies," he said, "you see clouds build in the west and feel the south wind blow and say 'it's gonna rain', and it does. Why can't you read the *signs of the times*?"

The weather-forecast on the TV shows weather systems as they develop and move through. Weather systems are large masses of air circling around a low-pressure center. They move generally from West to East and rotate counterclockwise. Their diameter varies, but can span hundreds of miles. Their movement from West to East can be fast or slow. Turbulence develops at the leading edge—greater variances of temperature and moisture create greater or lesser turbulence. The wind generally blows from the South and East. Once the front moves through, the central area of the system is more benign with sporadic turbulence. As the "doldrum" mid-region of the weather cell moves through turbulence again returns along the trailing arc, only this time the wind generally is from the North and West.

Western cultural history is a massive cyclone much like a weather system; except, its movement and development takes centuries, not days. A useful way of looking at history from the time of Christ to now is to see it as one huge slow-moving weather system. The time of its turbulent leading edge coincides with the time of imperial church/ state culture from Constantine to the Reformation (4th to 15th century).

The centrifugal energy of overreach at the outer perimeter is where the greatest havoc is wreaked; the crusades, Islamic conquests, suppression of the Eastern Church, witch hunts, internecine wars of City-States, church mercantilism, Protestant revolt, 30-years Wars of Religion, the Counter-Reformation and the denominationalizing of Christianity.

The doldrum, the low pressure sporadically violent region at the center of the cyclone includes the time from Enlightenment to the end of Modernity; the present Postmodern era is beginning movement from the low pressure middle and is entering the trailing turbulent backside arc; stormier times will follow as culture moves toward the new and potentially more stable high pressure region of evolutionary world consciousness.

Real change is coming. Fresh air, sunshine and good growing weather are on the way. Let's prepare the season for global greening and keep faith with nature.

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