

Getting All Up in Someone's Faith

Written by Alex Baer

Sunday, 09 September 2012 18:40

It's Sunday, and Elvis's Bible just brought \$94,000 at auction.

We are left in the pews wondering what Jesus might have made of that, in light of so many clear instructions and concise admonitions that the wealthy are to give their riches and material possessions to the poor.

There are likely no specific passages in the Bible providing a loophole to hoard wealth in order to buy a *spendy* celebrity Bible, but the ironies are still striking.

Not to get into a scripture-shootin' war here, but you'd think Matthew 19:21, Luke 12:33, and Proverbs 22:16 -- among many others -- would have had plenty to say to the devout, and have guided and coaxed much better behavior by now from *all* well-heeled Bible-thumpers.

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Sidebar: A pair of *The King's* stained underwear was also up for sale in England, but was not sold: The \$11,200 reserve was not reached, having obtained only \$8,000 in bids before interest trickled off.

Now, one is able to think any number of things after being advised of this urgent news bulletin regarding Elvis's shorts. Among my own more burning questions: *How on Earth does one fairly determine the reserve asking price for a pair of not-so-well-laundered celebrity underwear?*

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Although I'm fairly sure I want to hear nothing regarding the sordid history of how these underpants were obtained, it may be generically interesting to discover how it is a *singular* article of clothing has come to be known as a *pair*.

If memory serves, there was a passing *half-fast* (as we used to demurely and politely say in the quaint terrain of yesteryear) answer that stated pants of any kind were odd constructs, being singular on the top, and plural on the bottom -- a cheeky description, surely. Roomy and elastic arguments and accounts can be made in all directions, probably.

Such elemental and elementary confusions vault me back to various contusions of understanding -- or, in Bush-ese, my own *misunderestimated* awareness -- of what was being said or sung in church:

spray. □ *Sleep in heavenly peas.* □ *Bringing in the sheep.*

And so on.

It was a busy time, I was young, I had an active imagination...

Let us

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From such bittersweet Sunday shambling we turn more dourly serious: There are a few more questions riding up on my psyche today like a cheap pair of shorts. Here goes, on a few of these *mental wedgies*.

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Flashback: John Fitzgerald Kennedy had to defend his running as president, being a member of the Catholic faith, and was forced to reassure people and a clamoring press that he would not answer to the Pope in any decisions made from the Oval Office, should JFK win election.

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Flash forward: Willard Mitt Romney is a bishop, a church officer in the Mormon faith, and is running for that same office, but has yet to be asked any significant questions regarding his beliefs, where his allegiances may lie, or how his faith might control his decisions while in office, should he win election.

Catholicism's been around for 2,000-plus years, Mormonism fewer than 200. It appears longevity is not a natural key to quick acceptance, or a more moderated suspicion, in the population and the press. So much for intuitive perception.

Of course, wearing special undergarments, keeping various rites secret, combined with the real and imagined vagaries and conflicts of polygamy, hasn't helped Mormonism's press. Add to it the Mormon belief that one's God lives on the Planet Kolob and will make all believers gods, too -- *well...*

Many people would and do still say this all sounds like a cult, given all those quirky facets and traits.

Some people think that the member of any cult -- no matter how heavily-credentialed by time or not -- who is running for public office, should and *would* get at least an initial, *drive-by-screening* from the press regarding
all
their beliefs.

Of course, many people holding tight claim as spiritual beings would themselves say that *all* religions are cults, and it's just a matter of degree -- that it's only the number of members in any religious group that helps tip the balance, moving them across the threshold from
cult
to
religion

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In 1943, at age 25 in World War Two, JFK took command of the PT-109 during his combat tour in the Pacific. In 1966, at age 19, during the Vietnam War, by contrast, WMR was beginning his 30-month missionary tour of France.

JFK had fought poor health and had battled to get into the Navy, and was finally successful owing to the influence of his powerful father; JFK was injured in the war, in an accident that killed two of his crew. WMR received draft deferments as a missionary during Vietnam and lived safely in France, despite a car accident in which he was a passenger, but which took the life of the Mormon Mission's president's wife.

JFK ran for president and was harangued by people and the press about his 2,000-year-old religion, and fears the Pope would be running the U.S. from Rome. WMR is running for the same office believing in a 200-year-old religion, without expressed concern about anyone running the U.S. from the Planet Kolob.

Yes, of course: Different worlds, era, and men. Whatever else may be inferred from any comparisons -- and many interesting but contrasting parallels are available -- there is certainly this: The press has been comatose regarding Romney's religion, and most of his deepest beliefs, when you you come right down to it.

With the media so lethargically feeble on this point, and so torpidly disinterested in doing any direct follow-up with Willard -- or any follow-through with anyone in his camp on this subject at this point -- it's enough to make you think the fix is already in, and the election's *a done steal*. I mean, *a done deal*.

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Observing the quadrennial circus and sideshow of Republican voter suppression efforts, scam letters, and misdirection-by-robocall campaigns all over the U.S., one wonders how any of their activities and efforts can possibly be legal.

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Yet, these favorite GOP dirty tricks to advance their own numbers and stifle a free vote by the People continue to be pushed, fronted, and supported by big bucks. The hope is they will be able to confuse, inconvenience, and trick susceptible voters from turning out.

These illegal-seeming efforts are in addition, of course, to the *zombification* and mind control provided by right-wingnut, mainstream media propaganda forced and jammed down everyone's necks for the past 20-plus years.

You don't need to own a tinfoil beanie to realize this: Just because current events are making you paranoid, doesn't mean *THEY* are *not* following you.

Perhaps developing a type of paranoia is the first active step in noticing something is very badly -- and just plain -- *wrong*.

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Like enshrining Elvis's *underpants*, for heaven's sake.

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(Thank goodness no one has -- *so far!* -- spotted any religious likenesses on *The King's* shorts, or we'd never, ever hear the end of it.)

Elvis's Bible and shorts:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-19531917>

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<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-19385100>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-19272663>

JFK:

<http://www.historynet.com/pt-109-disaster.htm>

WMR:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitt_Romney

<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-08-22/romney-in-car-crash-led-mormons-from-tragedy-in-france>

Regarding religions and cults, in a piece by TVNL's founder:

<http://tvnewslies.org/tvnl/index.php/editorial/jesse-richards-commentary/21286-is-your-religion-a-cult-of-course-it-is.html>