

Christmas Chronicling



This being the Christmas issue—yes, in this magazine we are permitted to use the “C” word—I will tell you about a very religious man, a chronicler of

change and decay, namely Thomas Fleming, editor of *Chronicles*, a monthly review of our culture, or lack thereof. Fleming recently spoke to Derek Turner, editor of *Right Now*, a conservative British publication. Tom is a former university teacher of classics who specialized in Greek tragedy and the technique of lyric poetry; he is also an Aristotelian by philosophy and a Southerner by conviction. In other words, a serious although very humorous man who thinks Paris is the French capital, rather than a talentless publicity-seeking Hollywood celebrity with an IQ lower than her age.

Fleming has often been told that his respectful views on Christianity, paganism, and Darwin are incompatible and that a good Catholic must detest ancient pagans and reject all that science teaches, and to that he answers with two words: “Prove it.” He dislikes fanaticism and ideology. It is the one quality he has taken from the Anglo-American tradition, that of tolerance for other creeds, a very Christian thing in my opinion. “I quite understand why serious ancient pagans were reluctant to give up a tradition that included a richness of ritual and a high intellectual theology.” He thinks Christianity took a wrong turn in the 18th century, when it attempted to reinvent the Church as a universal ideology. He calls Samuel Johnson the greatest conservative writer because “He was painfully aware of human suffering and inhumanity but firmly committed to social order which, however imperfect, improves the possibility of leading a good life.”

He also points out the contradictions of our culture—for example, the Constitution of the United States, which so

many Americans believe to be the answer to every problem in the world, including a place called Iraq. “When they founded Liberia with former American slaves they adopted the US constitution, but I have to say that the history of Liberia has been rather different from that of the United States.” Social, moral, and cultural questions take precedence over political questions, according to Fleming. He no longer believes in political parties or movements in the United States because they are unreliable, and their leaders will say and do anything in order to be elected. “I make friends with individuals rather than groups.”

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Conservatism, according to him, used to have an emphasis on tradition, the nation, our common history, small government, free enterprise, and so on. Needless to say, he regards neoconservatives as “charlatans and liars” and does not believe there is a single neocon thinker who can be taken seriously. “They are nothing but warmed-over socialists, leftists really. The elemental Leftist tendency has always been to oppose the civilized order, just as it opposed Christianity in the 15th century, the aristocracy in the 18th and 19th, and the monarchy. Then it was the free market which had to be eliminated. Today, social Leftism wants to eliminate the family and every semblance of sexual normality. In every generation, the target changes but the revolution rolls on, destroying everything that makes us sane and normal and healthy.”

Amen! Just as Fleming was making his pronouncement about normality and health, the *New York Times* led off its wedding section with a full-page picture and text of two men getting married, normal couples taking a back seat in the following pages.

He is also very sound on Iraq. He points out that the truth is that the U.S. has porous northern and southern borders, and terrorist agents can come across at will. Yet we refuse to do anything about them. Instead, we are fighting a war we can never win and are stirring up terrorism against us. When asked about his policy program in relation to Islam, Fleming concluded that we should disestablish the Islamic governments the Clinton administration imposed in the Balkans and restore Christian areas to Christian control

while compelling the Albanian drug cartels in Kosovo to rebuild the hundreds of churches they have destroyed. Again, like a modern Delphic oracle, but more precise, no sooner had Fleming said that than the *New York Times* revealed that Bosnia is becoming a haven for Islamic militants. Leave it to the *Times* to discover something that even little old me knew was going to happen the moment we started bombing the hell out of the Christian enclaves back in 1998.

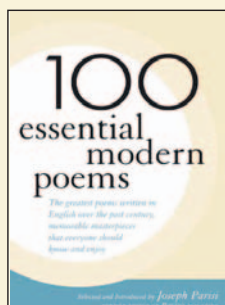
Finally, he believes we should allow no more Muslims into the United States and encourage our European allies to begin a humane process of repatriation. Last but not least, we need a fair settlement for the Israelis and Palestinians and to “provide the muscle to enforce it.” It is a fantasy program all right, but once again I can only say, “Amen!” And a very happy Christmas to all of you. ■

Gifts of gab.



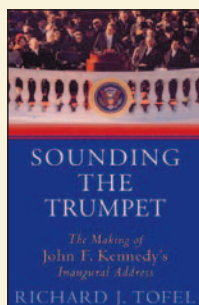
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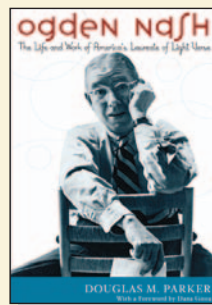
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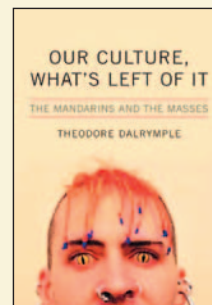
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