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AGAINST THE MACHINE

I just read with interest “Mutiny in the Valley” by Michael Brendan Dougherty (Oct. 8).

I, too, decided to get involved in the local races in Putnam County and ran against an incumbent for a legislative seat in the 5th District. My opponent was part of the local “machine,” and, like my friend Matt Neuringer said in the article, to get involved in local politics, you have two choices: “kiss the ring” or primary. I chose to primary, and with a budget of only \$1,000, I received nearly 35 percent of the vote running on an anti-illegal alien, anti-tax platform.

It was incredible to see how local Republicans did everything in their power to prevent me from getting on the ballot and then spent thousands of dollars to ensure my defeat. The chairman of the Putnam County Republican Party, Anthony Scannapieco, is also a chairman of the Board of Elections. Talk about a conflict of interest.

If anything, this race has emboldened me to continue in politics. The local Republican machine must be smashed, and a new populist Republican Party must take its place. It will be an uphill battle, but if we are to take back our Republic, we must do it one village, one town, and one county at a time.

RICK MONTES
Carmel, N.Y.

DIGITAL CRUSADE

I would like to thank you most sincerely for James Pinkerton’s wonderful article, “The Once and Future Christendom” (Sept. 10).

I, too, have often despaired at the possible passing of the Christian West, but it may not be too late to save it. The very people who have demonized it with such relish will no doubt be those who suffer most upon its demise.

Do you think there is any sense in forming a sort of international “Save Western Civilization” movement? I would love to participate in any such activity.

ELIZABETH BRINDEN
Via e-mail

Jim Pinkerton replies:

I have been thinking of ways to build upon the article, and indeed, several correspondents have suggested some sort of “Christian Conference” or “Organization of Christian States.” Any such theological-political manifestation along those lines would be fine with me, although, of course, I have no power to make such a thing come into being.

What I decided to do was this: I created a group listing on Facebook entitled “Council of the West.” And I encourage you to join FB as a member, and then join “CotW.” It’s free, and, so far as I can tell, mostly wholesome.

If you go to “CotW,” you will see that it’s just me and a few friends. Any outsider might say, “Phooey! It’s just eight or so people on a site with 40 million members in a world of 6.2 billion people.” To which my reaction is: “Even the greatest journey begins with a single step.”

If you go to the discussion board feature of “CotW,” you will see, in particular a little discussion of the word “irenicon.” That is, something that brings harmony. One such irenicon was the King James version of the Bible, as I detail in that posting. Nobody knew that particular translation of the Bible, begun almost four centuries ago, would be the translation that endures as most popular, and most influential—even atheists would have to agree that the KJV is perhaps the most influential “literary” work in the English language, and most Christians, of course, revere the KJV for its solemn and stately style.

What’s the “irenicon” equivalent for today? It’s obvious to me that just as the printing press was the “killer app” of the 17th century, so today it’s the Internet.

So here’s my idea: an online irenicon. If the English language could unite and inspire vast swathes of humanity back then, then maybe now the English language, plus the Internet, could do the same in our time. I am not exactly sure what form it will take, but one idea is to figure out a way to get all 2.3 billion Christians to be part of the same “Virtual Christendom.”

Obviously, there are a zillion objections to be raised, but equally obviously, any Christian should be eager to fulfill the injunction of Paul in Ephesians: “Keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

It seems to me that if everyone in Christendom could gather around a few simple precepts—designed for ecumenism, not division, and certainly not any sort of religious or political dominion—then maybe a lot of people would want to sign up, and then we would be on our way toward a “Christian Internationale.”

What would happen then? I don’t know. But I would pray that God would smile upon the undertaking.

The American Conservative welcomes letters to the editor. Submit by e-mail to letters@amconmag.com, by fax to 703-875-3350, or by mail to 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA 22209. Please include your name, address, and phone number. We reserve the right to edit all correspondence for space and clarity.