

The call of Enterprise Symbiosis

23 August 2000

Orient sits in the Kettle River valley of Northeastern Washington. In size and structure it is similar to the picturesque villages of New England, but there the resemblance ends. Instead of white painted churches and houses with picket fences, Orient can be pictured as mid-twentieth century run down. **To the east First Thought Mountain dominates the sunrise, leaving Orient as either the second thought, the last thought, or more fitted in its after-thought.** But Orient is the civic center of a diverse community of hard working American's with strong beliefs in themselves and America, and little time for dreaming. When hard reality is part and parcel of your life, the speculations of what might be, are beyond the distant sunset, in Seattle or over on the coast.

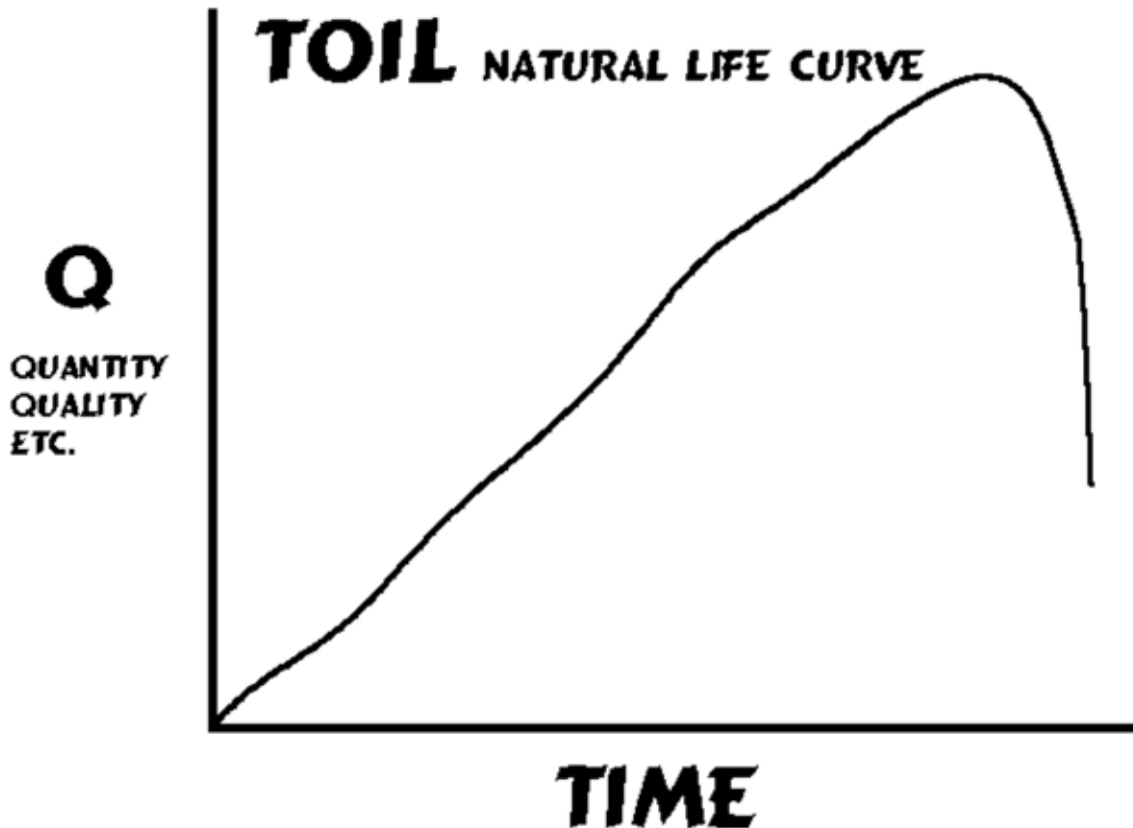
The center of the community is the Orient Inn. The Tavern as it is still known, except on the sign, is the only place one can purchase a meal within a distance of over twenty miles. I have a small acreage about three miles down the Kettle, so when the time does not permit the luxury of a home cooked meal, the faire served in the Inn, provides the nourishment required after a long day of manual labor. Depending upon the time and the day of your arrival, the meal also provides nourishment that feeds the soul, sometimes good, sometimes not so pleasant.

Sunday afternoons is one of those times when you may walk in elated but, walk out a changed person. Sunday afternoon could be described as the church service of the Disfranchised Fellowship. The communion, both bread and wine, is served from a can of some huge brewery that has the name Lite or Light somewhere on its label. This pale, watery substance generally reflecting the lives of the communicants. Wasted, opportunity, broken and buried dreams. Normally, there is at least one pew (or bar stool) available in case you need a sermon on total depravity and guilt. Grace and gratitude always being in short supply. Upon reflection, that doesn't seem all that different from the church that many Christians around the world attend on Sunday morning.

Work week evenings much more reflect the general attitude of the community. As long as you leave your selfish ways in your vehicle, you will be accepted by those finishing a hard day's work as another member of the human race, who needs the companionship and acceptance of others before returning to the place up somewhere, beyond the highway that leads only to Canada.

It was on one of those evenings, I was served by an attractive blond. I was fortunate enough to sit beside her significant other, as we call those cohabitating members of the opposite sex, our society seems to appropriately condone outside the commitment of marriage. As sometimes will happen in these circumstances, the topic soon became dumb blond jokes. These she ignored, or endured almost without visual emotion, until she walked over to her man and ask, **"Do you know why blond jokes are so short?"** After a prolonged silence, looking deep into his human structure she stated, **"So that men are able to remember them!"**

The subject then changed into something a little less threatening to the male ego, and so we too shall move on into something more compatible with the male of the species, and our ability to learn and comprehend. **This week we will look at great men, whether well known or unknown and their calling or purpose, what I call the Toil Natural Life curve.** That representation is attached to the email but will appear in this location, if by chance you cannot open the attachment, when this article is uploaded to the web site. Basically, as compared to the exponential growth shown in the Bug curve last week, the Toil curve reflects linear growth, more appropriate with the mental and spiritual growth of we humans.



When I first developed this representation, **Ronald Reagan** was president and it was in some way idealized to show that he reached the zenith of his life as president at age 69 and serving in that capacity for eight years. Little did I know then, that he would still be here some dozen years later, suffering from Alzheimers. But just because we do not understand the circumstances of that debilitating illness, does not mean in God's infinite plan that this illness will not have eternal benefits to President Reagan, above and beyond the stature he endured as our President. I'm sure if he could, and the other members of his family and friends would testify, this time is a much more trying and growing time than the honor and prestige of being the leader of the most powerful nation ever on earth.

Over the last few months I have been doing a lot of thinking about the calling of men and women, but since the object here is to keep it simple, this will be confined to a series of short illustrations men can remember, or perhaps more to the point, the author can create.

I think it all began with a conversation I had one Sunday after church. **Rich** is somewhere in his medical residency/internship at the University of Washington. He is the son of medical missionaries to Kenya, and his dad is an orthopedic surgeon, Rich is following in his father's path. I mentioned that I had a number of classes over my university days with Premed students and how I greatly enjoyed beating them on examinations. However, I didn't understand the yearning to get into medical school and to become a doctor, that many of them that I have known personally have had. On the down hill slope of his nine year program, I ask how he kept on going through all that his training would endure, without the promise of a big pay check he could make fixing up some over paid jock in this country. Rich said that it was knowing that he could make a real difference in the lives of many people who had no other hope for a better life in this world. That was what helped him to continue onward, when his emotions just didn't seem up to it. He added, something like, "**In other words, it is my calling!**"

Garrett, receives donations at the local St. Vincent de Paul facility in Seattle, According to his own testimony he has been at it twenty six years. Nothing is junk to him, if the store can sell it and make some money to help the poor. Poverty is a disease in this society that should have been eradicated, through the benevolence of good men and women evolving into a being of higher conscious power. Since that has not, nor is ever going to take place, we need men like Garrett, pack of Camels in his shirt pocket, to make a difference in the lives of people who have no where else to turn. In other words, **it is the calling that Garrett has followed and it has given purpose to his life.**

For some reason, watching **Al Gore**, I don't think, at this time, he has the calling to be our next president. He is just not full of that "spit and vinegar" of faith (from "*The Cape*" on the CD, *Walking away a winner*, by Kathy Mattea, 1994) required to make it happen. Perhaps it is just that at this time there is no real way he can distance himself far enough from the sad legacy of Bill Clinton, and deep in his heart of hearts he knows it. Perhaps more importantly he has enough depth and the perspective to understand that the job is not all that it is cracked up to be. But because everyone expects him to put on the valiant effort, there is something about giving it the old college try, even facing potential defeat, that brings closure and the ability to move onward and upward.

After eight years of the Presidency of **Bill Clinton**, there seems to be some cracks in the veneer of his purposeful drive. The man from Hope as come a long way, is there a calling after sacrificing so much, for so little time, in the vanity under the sun. As Jimmy Carter, the man Ronald Reagan defeated, mentioned , President Clinton has still twenty five years ahead of him, to develop a lasting legacy. It is this lasting legacy of **Jimmy Carter**, his faith, and the Carter Center, that will cause us to look more favorably upon the rightful legacy of the positive contributions of Carter's presidency.

I once worked along side a job shopper named **Vern Rabbe**, who had managed some of the largest paper mills in North America. Now semi-retired doing facilities engineering at Boeing, he enlightened me on his wisdom for finding the right man for the job. His criteria was to find someone who really didn't care whether he got the job at all, but was fortified with enough personal "spit and vinegar" to do his best according to his abilities and his integrity. He could have said, "It doesn't matter whether that is cleaning toilets, or president of the United States." For all jobs done right are really jobs of service, sometimes we just get the priorities messed up.

In that regard, like Al Gore, **George W. Bush** has seen the presidency up close and personal. But even though he is seeking the job with a monetary and physical zeal, he seems to sense that it is a job and a calling, and probably not near as much fun as being Governor of Texas, The calling and purpose of life is really not about having fun, but there is much satisfaction and enjoyment to be gained from giving every day your best shot and letting the chips fall as they may, or let God work out the details. Those chips or details depending on your religious orientation.

I have to vote for George W., For **my dad was a George W. also**, who went by Wally and G.W. I am legally a G.W. B. also, but instead of being stuck with the handle George, I am stuck with the explanation, now that is Gerald with a G and Jerry with a J or is it . . ." For those reasons alone it makes us closer than family, or perhaps it is just one of those guy things.

My dad was a school administrator (principal) in the small towns of Eastern Washington for thirty three years. We moved every five years or so. He passed on before I had the opportunity to tell him how much I loved him, or to ask if we moved because he liked the challenge of a new location, or whether he just got tired of some of the distasteful people you have to deal with in small town America. In any event whenever we went back to one of those old communities, one or two of his old male students would come up to him and say, "I just wanted to thank you personally, for you had a bigger (more important) impact on my life than my own father," That was even true in my own high school class, just a little over twenty miles down the road from the Inn at Orient.

Not knowing the family history of Garrett and Vern, it seems that the calling and purpose of most men seems in some way to be highly influenced by their fathers, either natural or surrogate. Perhaps Bill Clinton's problems that in many ways have overshadowed his tremendous abilities, have stemmed from that lack of a good role model. Having been all he ever wanted to be and achieving it at such an early age, should allow him to search for that purpose and calling that lasts beyond the last poll and the power and prestige of a transitory office. **To understand that we must seek the true, compelling call and the pursuit of the purpose of Enterprise Symbiosis. The partnership instituted by God to bring meaning to the lives of His highest creation, mankind.**

PRAYER PLANTS

In Pilgrim's Progress, Christian early on passes through the "Slough of Despair" and moves on to greater and more meaningful events, places, and things. Perhaps it was just the wisdom of the ultimate author, with John Bunyan in allegorical cooperation, providing a great diverse array of challenges to face the pilgrimage of Christian. In any event, or because of all my training in the sciences of water, most of my crossings seem through the "Slough of Despair." This last time early Sunday morning, has helped me realize that its depth to me is really on account of my own shallowness. The purpose and calling I hope these messages in context portray, is that is part of all human condition, especially men and blonds. Praise the Lord for brunette women for without them the journey should surely end in disaster. But for all men and women the love of God is so encompassing and so much beyond understanding, that it is all right to be who you are now because in our toil we are in the process of becoming so much more. This is infinitely superior than in trying to be who you are not, or who you never shall become in your own strength. These last pursuits being the rite of most of the evangelical churches of our era.

God is faithful and with the crossing of the slough, light has again returned to the journey. Circumstances while better than last week's writing are still very tight, especially on the financial front. Before any further progress may be made toward a more permanent living and ministry arrangement, the Lord must provide the required helpers and resources. Please intercede for those needs and provisions.