

# Chronicles of Diversity



*Your leadership weekly*

## Community Habitat

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We all have been indoctrinated to believe that grace is amazing. We must learn that grace is only sufficient. This link is only described once in the Bible, anything more than that would mean that this one reference was not sufficient. This reference describes Paul's infirmity in 2 Corinthians 12:

*Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

If you think about it meaningfully, grace is the attribute of God that describes His interaction with not only mankind, but also creation. Creation was created, is maintained, and one day will be restored by the grace of God. Everything else flows, or proceeds from grace alone.

I relate that eternal truth as we start this new year. Let me give you an idea on why this concept was so important to me as I closed out 2002.

This community series began many moons ago, and seems to be progressing slowly by the grace of God. Perhaps you have asked, "When will he get to the point?"

My answer would have been, "When I feel that God has given me a point to get to." Just as last week when we needed another word for "treasure" in earthen vessels, which I termed acceptance. This week we need another term for grace, as it relates to the present and future of this ministry.

The term I found this last week was habitat. If there was ever a term laced with overtones of political correctness, then community habitat would be such a term. Luckily in the correct world of our culture, most of the time the words are not linked.

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In that world, community is a culture where we highly evolved brothers and sisters of diversity, love one another in a oneness of selfless karma. Habitat is the place where the wild salmon run, song birds sing, and it never rains before sundown.

But going back to the thought of sufficient grace, community habitat is where life is lived. We just don't understand it because it is too complex for us to understand. Hence, much of the time we are oblivious to the sufficiency of God's grace, that gives us trials and tribulations, seasons of rain and seasons of drought.

For at least the last couple of hundred years the Christian church, especially its Protestant sects or denominations, have done a great job of imitating the community habitat of the evolving world. In that time God allowed that to happen, while maintaining the sufficiency of his grace to save His elect from that morass of deadly pabulum.

I have been noticing recently however, changes. Of the people I listen to, and the literature I read, as well as what I see happening slowly in these weekly pages, there seems a renewed understanding in the need for discipline and discipleship, beginning in the church and then exported to the worldly culture as a whole. In that slowly brightening illumination of sufficient grace, a choice between two cultures seems to be emerging.

For those who hunger and thirst for the discipline of formal theology, there seems to be developing a true distinction between the City of God and the City of Man. For those without that grace, church is beginning to be someplace that "somthin is happenen." As yet no one quite knows for sure, but changes are taking place on many fronts.

What I have become aware of this last week of the old year, is in the new year these changes take place because of the sufficient grace of a changing community habitat. Before we go further let us look at these two definitions from the American Heritage Dictionary:

### **Community**

NOUN:

Inflected forms: pl. communities

1 a. A group of people living in the same locality and under the same government. b. The district or locality in which such a group lives. 2 a. A group of people having common interests: the scientific community; the international business community. b. A group viewed as forming a distinct segment of society: the gay community; the community of color. 3 a. Similarity or identity: a community of interests. b. Sharing, participation, and fellowship. 4. Society as a whole; the public. 5. Ecology a. A group of plants and animals living and interacting with one another in a specific region under relatively similar environmental conditions. b. The region occupied by a group of interacting organisms.

ETYMOLOGY:

Middle English *communité*, citizenry, from Old French, from Latin *commnits*, fellowship, from *commnis*, common. See common.

*Notice in the definition, the creation of natural meanings do not come into play until number 5.*

### **Habitat**

NOUN:

1. The area or environment where an organism or ecological community normally lives or occurs: a marine habitat. 2. The place where a person or thing is most likely to be found. 3. A structure that affords a controlled environment for living in extremely inhospitable locations, such as an underwater research laboratory.

ETYMOLOGY:

Latin, it dwells, third person sing. present of *habitre*, to dwell. See habitable.

*Notice the cultural separation between our perception of the natural habitat, and our personal community.*

Digesting these perceptions further, we believe that our culture determines our community. Habitat is outside of our control, except in wildlife management. Now enlarging on these relationships, from God's exercise of sufficient grace, we are the wildlife, whose habitat is going to be altered. From that altered habitat design, will develop the models, applications and programs, to produce change and choice between and within the City of God and the City of Man. This all takes place within the limits of the sufficient grace of God. Not only will it be amazing in the individual sense, but also in the community sense. "Amazing Grace" will really mean something again.

Thinking back on it, for as long as I can remember I have been interested in Human Community Habitat. Ghost towns and ships are primary models that are available in this world to broaden our concept of community by altering our habitat. Contrary to some people that think they know me quite well, I am not interested in isolation as an end, but as a means to create a simple model that we can get our minds around. Perhaps a better term, is a place to remove the distractions that this culture uses to so easily distract our undisciplined personality.

In the pre-Protestant era, many monastic communities began with such a goal, but quickly lost their roots to the wider community, both natural and human. The problem was not with the community habitat however, but with the anathema of the understanding of sufficient grace. But in our religious enthusiasm, we again destroyed a necessary habitat without a full understanding of the sufficient interrelationships of God's community design. Habitat is a function of grace, not the end itself. The stuff flows from grace, not grace from the stuff.

After Christmas, I think I found a ship on the Internet that fits my model of Community Habitat . We can use it as a scientific platform, as a mercy and trade ship, as well as a community center. After the new year I will see where that path leads. *Its picture is on the article masthead.*

"Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink," from the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is not about a baseball team before Safeco Field, it is a poetic description of a world without a true distinction between sufficient grace and perdition. By learning more about natural habitats do we gain the perspective necessary to alter cultural communities. That is the hope, the vision and the sufficiency with which we enter this new year.

The vast majority of this list is mailed to missionaries, and similar Christian service personalities. You understand the sufficiency of God's grace for situations that occur on a daily basis. That understanding is primarily a result of your habitat, where ever that may be.

Domestically, that habitat does not exist and if it did exist, most Christian people have been trained, not only to shun adventure, but to view the trials and tribulations associated with grace's sufficiency as a result of doing something wrong, or sinful. Following up on the familiar teaching of Peter getting out of the boat to walk on the water with Jesus. If Peter never got into the boat to begin with, we definitely would not have a story.

The goal of this ministry in the next year is to provide the boat with a habitat that does not freak out completely the untested and the timid. But that vessel will never voyage beyond this paper without grace sufficient in the lives of others to overcome the fears of many domestic domestics. Intercede this year for many changes to occur in the habitat of Christianity in general, but also in the USA as the church and as the culture.