

# Chronicles of Diversity

*Your leadership weekly*



*Future Home of  
Posada Wonder Springs?*

## Community Disconnect

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Virtually all the pastors and members of the pastoral staff of every church I have known wanted to reach the world with the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. Most of the common Christians, or what some churches call the laity, share that vision but with a somewhat more limited scope.

The problem is that the evangelical behavior that is acceptable for a pastor in and out of the church proper, is at a high level. That same behavior however, in the business community probably will at least marginalize your effectiveness within the enterprise. And at the extreme end it may even cause you to lose your job or position.

In these situations it is prevalent and easy to convince yourself that you are being persecuted for your faith. So what is the solution? You go to church and find a peer group of others in your same situation and compose a series of laments about how your fellow workers are all going to go to hell.

Now let us assume for a minute that God has placed you in this secular environment. What is your purpose for being there?

Most modern evangelicals believe, and most of those same pastors above would teach, that your chief purpose is to be a corporate evangelist, for lack of a better job description. The problem is that this task is not in the job description that your employer hired you to do. They hired you to do a job, fill a position, help make the company a success and "what you do on your own time is your business."

Now one of the myths of evangelistic sales (revivalism) is that if you plant enough seeds something will someday sprout. In that light (or darkness) you let your little light shine. This also assumes, in serious error, that people will not know you are a Christian unless you share your testimony constantly. Again a revivalism marketing myth.

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Now if we change the assumption on why God put you in your enterprise situation from “Jesus sales” to something else, we may begin to see that for generations the church has missed its calling, and hence its fruitfulness. So what is this calling? Not to just be seed planters and harvesters, but also to be soil tillers, or to run the plow.

Plowing, or tilling the soil is the hardest most back breaking work in the farming process. It is a thankless endeavor that someone needs to do, but all that appears to happen to you is that you get tired and dirty. Sounds like the job you do most of the time, except when you are evangelizing. And when you evangelize someone comes over and breaks the handle of your shovel and you are off the hook for this hard work.

No matter what your position, I am convinced that a Christian who focuses on the work that their position requires can so out perform the common folks that no one will not understand that you are in some way different, and have a gift that others do not enjoy. They understand you are one of those Christians, even if you never say a word about your faith. If you think about it with the wisdom, power, love and other aspects of God flowing out of you, this has to make you unique. That is provided you do not assume in the process you are the sinless saint, and not just another sinner saved by God’s grace alone.

Within the work environment even the most mundane job is in some way differentiated from the work of others. Your interactions with other people are different from the task others are asked to perform and something of perceived value is produced. This union of task makes some sort of product or performs some type of service.

So are there five other Christian people who have some specific knowledge of what your position might require on a daily basis? What about just one? This can include your spouse!

Just as you were trained to be a seed sower, chances are your church functions in the same way. It is not anyone’s fault it just evolved out of revivalism. Because that is all we have ever known we can make ourselves very busy sowing seeds and studying why the seeds don’t take root and produce the fruit they are supposed to produce.

“If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” has a corollary statement, “If it is broke, why keep the old one. Fix it right, or get a new one.”

Just as people are uniquely wired for retaining music, so we are uniquely wired to associate closely within groups of about five others. Saying, “How’s it goin,’” to a hundred, or a thousand, can’t fill that need. Our society is suffering from this tremendous social problem of personal isolation and instead of working to develop a structure to fill that need, the church plants a Jesus seed and expects everyone to be fruitful and multiply.

The answer to not multiplying should be, “Why should I bother, when you really don’t care about me, my needs, my family.” That is not some psychosomatic abnormality, you don’t need a shrink, you need someone else to validate your existence, your reason for living, your calling. No one evolves, or can be trained to such a point that they do not need, deep relationships with other human individuals. Every thing in the modern world points us in the direction of personal isolation, that is what we have been trained to believe, that individuality and self esteem is what we are all about. All this produces is the pits, and left untreated can lead to that deep real abnormal disease.

The bumper sticker says, “All you need is Jesus.” and “What would Jesus do?” Well Jesus is not the compassionate conservative, He is the one who created it all, including our need for other personalities. His compassion created the church. The only organization that the earth has ever produced that by itself can overcome that human isolation is the Christian church. But again that power does not evolve out of the ooze of modern society. First of all you need to drain the swamp, let the land dry, till the land, plant the seeds, and gather the harvest. That enterprise will be built within the structure of deep personal relationships we were created with, or it will not function at all.

That famous evangelical quote from the Bible stating that the labors are few (Luke 10:2), in our society we tend to lose the nature of the labor. It is hard work. And the work of the church is not just to make converts to Jesus, but to make disciples who understand the life transforming nature of that conversion.

You can begin to grasp that understanding in your wilderness isolation, but to move beyond the wilderness you must have the communion with others. The problem with all of the church is that because of our own personal isolation in the urban setting, we are afraid of the unknown wilderness of our own personality. Hence, there is no path ahead, only the “Slough of Despair”

Bushwhacking is difficult work as I had the opportunity to experience briefly last weekend. It was much easier to get back in the car and drive down the road. But that road and that car were built by a community of personalities with the vision to make our passage easier. That is the role of the church in the passage to eternity. It is about time that Christian leadership acknowledged the task and their responsibility of preparing the narrow path, or to oversee the laborers in God’s garden, to stay with our original metaphor.

### *Seeds for Prayer*

This last week I finally was able to make that long desired trip to Eastern Washington to begin this year’s work. I have learned major operations have a tendency to delay that sort of thing. The results were very productive but they were just a starting point for what appears to be some complex projects. Amazing to me, was just three weeks earlier I had been given permission to lift more than ten pounds with my arms and resume a normal life. God is truly good.

The potential missions house here in Seattle also seems to be moving forward at its snails pace. So the scope of the vision of what God wants to do seems to be moving completely into a Godly area and outside my ability. We need outside financing for a couple of years, but the trip east of the mountains, has made me more secure that a long term plan will work out somewhat along the path I had envisioned, it will just take that first miracle to get us started, and as alluded to above, I can, and will not be able to do it alone. We need some more labors, especially on this project at this time.