

Chronicles of Diversity

Your leadership weekly



*Future Home of
Posada Wonder Springs?*

In you, in community, in God

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Building a human community is the most difficult job given to man in this world. In the short of it, lack of community in the sinful sense, causes hunger, depravity, and war. But the doctrines of evolution have no real answer for this dilemma. Survival of the fittest is really about the evolved individual leaving the less enlightened to squander in the evolutionary ooze, while the dominance of "I" struggles out of the mire, onto the plain, and then to the mountain peak.

Only through his quest for some spiritual element buried deep in his psyche does the individual begin to reach out to others, and eventually to God. The church is one of those means. For this search man has his means and the God that exists has His means. As the church follows the laws of entropy, not of creation, flows the ways of man's religion and the power of Godly creative process ceases. What separates these two works is faith.

But faith is not a force that controls an unknowable future, but an opportunity to see into a designed future and be a part of that creative process. As created by God, this human faith must begin in you, move through your community, ultimately to find its rest in God and His power to create real stuff out of nothing. If we skip, or try to skip the steps (namely community), we suffer in unity and hence limit our understanding of the greatness of the object of our faith.

We live in a highly "evolved" society where the individual is paramount. This is reflected in the church as an emphasis on individual conversion. This conversion must be the starting point, not the zenith of our work. Without directing the converts into deeper things of communion with God, then the term discipleship ceases to have meaning. But true discipleship must be built on the community of believers, at this time, but also throughout time. This is why the worship service must incorporate that timeless element in a timely way. It must go deeper than a few new and old tunes by some Tune Smith. It must involve people outside, or beyond their sense of comfort, even if that risks them moving to a place where they feel more comfortable. Faith is lived beyond comfort, and a totally comfortable worship doesn't cut it.

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These last few weeks have been very difficult for me. I don't really know the reason. I could say it started when we first began to work seriously on getting this missions center, but that also coincided with about the time my Cardiologist changed my one remaining prescription. In any event, my mornings start out cool, and there seems to be a positive thing each and every day. But by the time evening comes I definitely am tired and have the pits. Perhaps, even bordering on depression. And it seems to repeat itself every day, and even after prayer nothing seems to help.

The medicine does lower my blood pressure, but I am taking such a small dose of medicine it cannot be having that much of an effect. But I have learned through this time of recovery that people with low blood pressure generally are more depressed than others. But in my case, I don't know. Would you pray for me?

Praying for other people is just about as far as community goes in the church today. That is an awesome start, but that should not be the conclusion of the matter. Beyond prayer, first of all I should know myself, my strengths and weakness, by some objective standard other than my personal infatuation with my superior gifts, or my low scum ball worthless understanding. Both are just the reverse of the same coin.

Over the years I have taken a number of spiritual gifts tests. An on-line example of one of these is found at: <http://www.cforc.com/sgifts.html>. The problem that I had when I recently took this is I agreed strongly with just about everything. There were some things I didn't have the tools to carry out, but I still had some desire to help in these areas also. So all in all it wasn't much help.

Psychology is a "science" that has developed over the last hundred years studying the human personality. When I was in college I called psychology a pseudo-science and with patron saints like Freud and Jung it isn't hard to understand why even today most of the field deals with forms of abnormal behavior.

So what about the vast majority of those who are uniquely strange, but still fit the qualifications of normal? Mathematical statistics determine if you are normal, but what does that really mean? Much of modern television consists of infomercials teaching you how to be better than what you are now. Buy now, and receive a \$400 value for only four payments of \$75, but act within the next fifteen minutes and this special offer will be available for only three payments of \$75. Such a deal. Then of course there are some ministries that offer a better return than this. I did some further Internet searches to see what might have been done to pigeon hole the masses without forking out some big bucks. What I discovered was Enneagram.

With all this type of testing you have to be aware that virtually all of it is developed with a slant toward our (your) evolution to a more highly enlightened animal. Having said that, the Enneagram purports to have its roots in early Islam or Christian mysticism, depending on the wishes of the particular program. Therefore, it should fit well with modern American evangelicalism, or quickly send you scurrying to find your own secluded cave (or prayer closet).

There are a number of ways you can determine your Enneagram, some free, for a general idea. Most of the real test costs about \$10. In my desire to be my own subject, I found some research that indicated that the best of these tests (valid and reliable) was contained in a small book called "The Essential Enneagram" developed at Stanford. The "Essential" is available on Amazon for \$ 8.00 or retails for \$10.00. I bought mine at retail at Borders.

It took me less than 20 minutes to determine who I was and how I react in certain situations. And I will have to confess, in my small sample of one, in the natural sense it nailed me. When you add the dimension on what God is doing in my life, things were not so clear however.

In that light it seems that God has been reinforcing my natural tendencies over many years, but at the same time He has added a bulldog tenacity in certain areas that doesn't fit at all with my Enneagram. Which is kind of cool to know, but what do you do with it?

The modern Enneagram traces its roots to only the early '70's. Could it be then the '60's flower children decided to try and become respectable? But what that really means, is that you can develop what ever application you would like to develop, because except for your lack of a Ph.D. in some related field, your application could change the face of modern evangelicalism, or business, or any endeavor that interests you.

Since what interests me is the developing of community with in the church, my analysis of my own Enneagram gives me a base line of my natural personality, by which to measure what God is doing to change me. That is a valuable insight. I'm not evolving, but I am being recreated. It makes me more determined to follow the path ahead, and allows me to enjoy the trip, because I am not the path builder. So to a certain extent if you combine the spiritual gifts test with the Enneagram, there might be a way that each of us can be more useful to each other. Without letting everyone know our deepest secrets.

This can lead us beyond ourselves, to communicate with each other. To be grouped together with those of complementary purposes. That might (will?) not be the same peer group structure we now use. To paraphrase one of those evolutionary sayings, "If we all agree, some of us are not needed. But probably more true, a lot of us are in the wrong place."

In God we may not be shaken, but we surely need to be willing to be moved. This unwilling spirit to not be moved on non essentials, while waffling on important issues is one of the reasons the church now plays a non effective role in society. We say we believe in God and His miracle working power as long as we are not asked to get out of our comfort zone. God uses people and circumstance to move us now, many times not to our liking, because we have determined our own good outcomes as we define the situation.

The only way we can accomplish God's end without as many negative pushings is to develop a community structure that will facilitate God's design for His church in a positive way. By adopting this community, that community will have both the power and the authority to positively restore, or reform the church, and by extension the rest of society. This is a life of faith, but faith that is not alone. Community is the faith support group, made up of normal people, without need of twelve steps, a series of groups of five functioning together and united as one.

Seeds for Prayer

We still are negotiating with the owners of the missions center on a number of fronts. This week I have been listening to the Bible in Exodus, and I feel like it is just one of those impossible problems or plagues after another. My credit was not stellar before, but since my mother died and I paid of all my debts, I now have no credit, which is a much more difficult obstacle in this world than bad credit. So without a miracle I shall not be able to do much financially short term. I envision that it will take a couple of years to put together the funding for this project in a way that I will feel comfortable with long term. The miracle(s) will be getting from here to there. Please intercede for this opportunity and see the picture on the PDF.