

Chronicles of Diversity

Your leadership weekly



A purple starfish, a part of a living natural community.

Prosperity flu

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I have begun trying to get exercise that will help my operation's recovery that is more cardiovascular and to cut down on the frequency of my other forms of exercise. So last week, after a time of shooting baskets, I came home and decided to get some further exercise on a home gym I bought with some of the proceeds from my mother's estate. I have gotten through my life without one of these contraptions, but I had decided it would help me develop or maintain some of my physical strength as I spend more time in front of this life altering device. It was definitely a purchase of prosperity, not something I really needed.

I bought it just before I learned I needed my operation, so I now do not look at it as such a frivolous purchase, it is just there has not been much opportunity to use it until now. A few times I had hooked up some light weights and worked with my chest, arms, and upper body. After returning from the basketball hoops I decided I could "kick it up a notch," so I more than doubled the weight, and used more and different exercises. I worked my chest, my arms, and did some tightening of my abs'. I finally had a total body workout.

In the middle of the night, I woke up with this pain in my stomach. It felt like I had eaten at least half a jar of hot pickled peppers. Not that I have ever eaten half a jar of hot pickled peppers, but this must have been how it would feel. As I lay there concerned about my gut pain, after a long time I realized it must be from the exercise earlier in the day

By the time I got up in the morning I ached all over my body. It wasn't like I was really sore from the exercise, it was more like how you feel when you have the flu. Just like the flu, I took a nap during the day and retired early that evening for a long nights sleep. When I woke up the next morning I felt fine. I joked to myself, "I must have had a case of the 24 hour Prosperity Flu."

As I thought more about it, I realized that Prosperity Flu is a more common disease than I had first thought. It is just that the real Prosperity Flu has symptoms we have never diagnosed as a

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disease. All of the developed world is surrounded by tons of consumer goods, like personal exercise machines, and then we wonder why our lives are as shallow and lifeless as the material objects that consume our lives.

As I watched television during the week, and I am not even going to touch that waste of precious life times, I was drawn to watch brief portions of the religious programs by a number of Christian broadcasters. For the most part, these presentations were not on any of the Christian networks, but on the regular secular channels, running in their time slots allocated for infomercials.

Interesting, in a sick sort of way, in the short times I watched these infomercials(?), was that only in a small minority, did I ever hear the name Jesus (two times). The God talked about could have been Allah, or any other god for that matter. The contents of most of these shows utilized somewhat biblical concepts, in a base way, to appease the deity to obtain happiness through stuff. This was really slick, and sick marketing. Oh, excuse me, evangelism.

This begs the question. If the evangel of the church (that most people see) is not Jesus Christ, His propitiatory atonement, and His bodily resurrection, is it any wonder the church is sick and dying of Prosperity Flu?

As I went to church Sunday morning, but more so Sunday night, in an especially moving worship service, I was extremely thankful that everyone I know in God's service, do their best not to promote this prosperity disease, but the true gospel healing of the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Our disease, both in and out of the church, is a function of our excess prosperity and its indulgences,(remember Martin Luther) that we purchase from our religious authority, too many times ourselves, to hopelessly spring our mortal souls from a temporal purgatory. What we need is a new Reformation!

Actually, that word has a stigma attached to it that probably would guarantee its unfruitfulness. That Reformation led to the dominance of western culture in a material way, as well as in religious and moral influence. Just as the birth of the church changed the known world in the first century, the Reformation changed our world until the present. Anyone who says otherwise, is rewriting history to fit their atheistic world view.

But just as in Old Testament Israel, this Promised Land prosperity has made us forget the God who gave us our material wealth. Part of the reason that Jews are hated around the world, ultimately stems from their belief in the true Jehovah, but that is many times played out in human ignorance into physical disdain for their wealth, both religious and temporal. America, as a Christian nation, in that same construct as modern Jewish Israel, doesn't get the connection. I must say, recently I am beginning to think our Christian President can't understand it either.

Old Testament Israel went into captivity for 70 years, and after that only a small remnant returned to the Holy Land. The Godly judgement of the next captivity, the Bible says, will only be seven years. But in this case only a remnant will escape this judgement, the vast majority of people having to suffer this Great Tribulation insitu.

Prosperity is not the issue, the Bible clearly teaches that prosperity is of the Lord. What is important is that we do not allow our material wealth to give us Prosperity Flu. That means that I should enjoy that exercise machine, and use it more that I have till the present. But it also means that I should invest more in other people who have not yet achieved any benefit from the last Reformation. In that way perhaps, they can forgo the "Babylonian Captivity" (again Martin Luther) that now captivates Christianity in the developed world and then I shall be part of that "Raptured Remnant".

Next week we shall look at some of our remedies, or antiviral prescriptions, for overcoming Prosperity Flu by serving these people passed by our developed world. In their material aid, and in the gospel we live as well as proclaim, God promises the healing we unknowingly seek.

Seeds for Prayer

In less than two weeks I leave for a two and a half week bus excursion to help plant two churches in Minnesota. Most, no all the responses I get when I tell people I am going on the bus and not the airplane is, "Why would you want to ride a bus with all the kids?" Part of it is that my first long trip when I was a kid was a Greyhound bus trip to Minnesota and beyond, and a return by school bus. But the difficult part for me to explain, is that I enjoy the presence of the kids, most of the time more than I do the adults. Now to whom am I trying to explain this?

This trip imposes some limitations on my Internet access that my prosperity has allowed me to take for granted. As a consequence, I have not been able to figure out a means that I find acceptable to issue these Chronicles, which means, and I feel that the Lord will provide as required. It really is an issue of Mac Internet access in a world dominated by PCs. So please intercede for the Lord's provision.

I am writing this from Eastern Washington and will issue the message when I return to Seattle via my Broadband access. I have spent the last couple of days beginning the work on fixing my mom's rental house in Reardan. The question of what to do with this asset once it is returned to a livable dwelling remains to be answered. Please intercede for this work also.