



# Chronicles of Diversity

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Chronicles of Diversity  
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*Jerry Bannon  
Wonder Springs  
7950 Seward Park Ave. S.  
Seattle, Washington USA  
98118  
phone: 206.660.0697  
email:  
bannon@createleaders.org or  
chronicles@createleaders.org*

*Please forward prayer requests  
to: prayer@createleaders.org*

*Washington State Charity  
Number: 7529*

*Visit our web site at:  
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## Complacency River

The Complacency is probably the oldest river in the world. While it is not named, it could be the river described in Genesis Chapter 2. As it leaves the garden of Eden it divides into four riverheads. The Bible calls these rivers the Pishon which skirts the land of Havilah, where there is gold. Historically where there is gold there is money, so for purposes of this article we shall rename the Pishon the Wealth.

The second river is named the Gihon, the third the Hiddekel, and the fourth the Euphrates. We will rename the Euphrates the Religion, for Babylon and the Euphrates have roots in all the world's religion. The Gihon we will rename the Knowledge, and the Hiddekel we will rename the Choice.

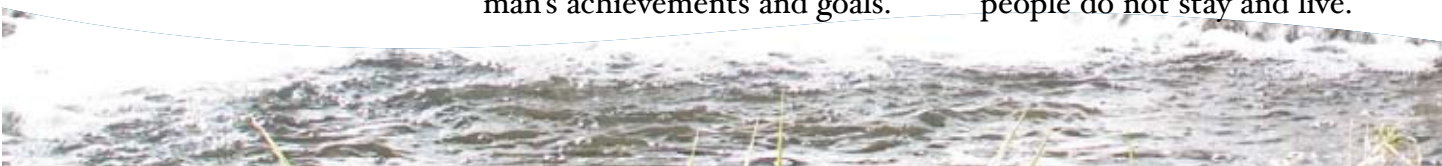
Of course these four names probably have no relationship with the actual rivers, except that after the fall of man into sin, these four areas of man's life have become the source of man's achievements and goals.

And as the Complacency is the source of all these rivers, taking a journey along any of these rivers can allow you to be prideful and arrogant as you drink their waters and move with their flows.

After the Genesis Flood the only river to remain from the pre flood era is the Euphrates in modern Iraq. But just as people were forced to disperse around the world after the Tower of Babel incident, so we can find the Complacency River and its tributary streams virtually everywhere.

All five rivers flow through the wilderness, now outside the Garden in Eden. As we have pointed out, in the Bible wilderness and desert, are all translated from the same word root, because simply in the Holy Land they are one and the same, only the written context will vary.

When we come to more temperate and tropical regions the definition must be enlarged to include all areas in which people do not stay and live.



However, outside the natural definition in creation, wilderness can include virtually any situation in life. It may occur in the city or in the country, the only scenario required is that circumstances eliminate most if not all of your community and friends, even though they may be sympathetic with your plight.

Therefore, wilderness experiences can become almost unlimited in their scope and nature. It might be a health issue, or finances, or family, or drugs, or any host of matters. What happens in all these issues, no matter our situation, or our religion, is that we grow or we die. The actual growth or death may not be immediate, and maybe reversible in another wilderness situation, but the outcome is always one or the other.

In that light it could be said that our entire life is nothing but a continuous wilderness journey, where we learn as is now popular to say, "Don't sweat the small stuff, and it is all small stuff." In other words, this trial, or this tribulation, or this temptation will pass with time. But there is a problem with looking at the turmoil in our life as all small stuff and this is where the Complacency River and its related streams come in.

Because over time we learn that through these experiences, that they soon pass, we all have a tendency to become complacent. If we were to get angry, or get happy, or show any emotion, that would be a good thing, but instead we say that that is life and learn to count our blessings. But all too often that counting helps us to maintain the status quo, rather than continuing upon our life's journey and growth. The Complacency is just a slow stagnate river of death.

There is a theme that runs through the Pentateuch in the Old Testament, and that of course is the forty year journey of the Jewish people through the wilderness on the way to the Promised Land. During that forty years, all those who left the worldliness of Egypt over the age of twenty perished in the desert, because of unbelief.

What that really says, regardless of their stiff necked complaining, these people camped most

of the time in the desert along the Complacency, the Religion, the Knowledge, the Wealth, and the Choice. And after forty years they were really dead. The presence of the Lord, His Manna, and freedom from ailments other than death, made them Complacent with what was happening. What I have never heard any preacher or pastor say, is that same forty year passage to death occurs to the majority of people in their congregations.

The zealous youth, hungry for God, get married, start a family, watch the family grow, forgo the missions trips, and instead, support a few missionaries. Then, as they become more wealthy, they no longer support the church financially, for they need the money to pay for some more toys. "God my life's too busy right now, after I retire, then I will serve you in the calling you gave me in my youth." After forty years of such complacency, while still in good health, virtually all of God's children are too dead to be of any heavenly good.

This of course is true not only in the church but the rest of society. The idealism of college years sets us up on the career path, and before long our goal to retire and do nothing but take up space becomes a self fulfilling prophecy.

What we all suffer with, is not so much with our desires, but our determination to take and break the wilderness on our terms rather than accept the trials and the tribulations as part of an eternal reality. In this life we will be graded on what we do or don't do. And those grades will determine not only our position of hell or heaven in eternity, but the jobs we will do. Our desire for the lazy river life reshapes true reality in ways we cannot fathom in this life, because the real river of life is too fast, too deep, and too powerful for us to ford or travel on our own.

The American Dream, and its corollary desires in the rest of the world, of course never admit that they are part of a vast Complacency river system. The river Wealth has power and toys of its own. All of which will be one day burned up. The Religion has many dwellers with fundamentalist views on legalism, and hypocrisy, but no docks for love and grace. The Knowledge shows us just how wise we are in our own eyes, and how we think we will one day figure it all out. Finally, the Choice allows us to merge all the flows into a current that makes us believe we did it all our way, when in fact our choices always miss the True Way.

Why are we so scared to take on the wilderness on its God's terms? Simply because we know that we do not have the capacity within ourselves to win the battle against the elements. So we choose to alter the reality of the situation in our mind, to the point where we think we can adapt to the circumstances on our own and thereby change the river's course.

Philosophically we find this perverted view of reality in the concept, "Does a tree falling in the forest make any sound." But it becomes dangerous when people are taught that thoughts create reality, and by extension that our faith will bring salvation, or even prosperity.

There are examples in the Pentateuch however, about a few people who didn't follow the twenty though forty, to death rules. Out of the couple of million that traveled to the promised land only Caleb and Joshua made the actual passage, and Moses became their leader at the age of eighty. It is said by the Bible's descriptions of their lives that they did not age in the natural way. Let us say they matured in God's wisdom and that helped them overcome the natural aging process.

So how do we mature in God's wisdom? Simply by looking at wilderness as the only reality in this world. Challenges to face in truth, and to rely on God to take you through. That however is not natural, because it requires God's grace alone to put us in the proper situation, and for us to trust in Him to bring us through. In other words this is complete opposition to what we can do for ourselves. Therefore, there is no need to play mind games to alter reality. John Muir's statement, "In Wilderness is the Preservation of the World," really contains much more truth than the conservationist ever thought.

There are seven passages in the Bible that deal with fear of the Lord and wisdom. Those seven are Job 28:28, Psalm 111:10, Proverbs 1:7, Proverbs 9:10, Proverbs 15:33, Isaiah 11:2, and Isaiah 33:6. Completely linked with this concept is our fear of the wilderness. So we think, if we don't do well God will send us all sorts of wilderness trials. So the best way to avoid these wilderness problems is never venture beyond our

limits of security. We surely can not fail if we never attempt anything. "Let's just buy a water front house in the Complacency drainage basin and never worry, we will just be happy."

Of course the only way that works is if we redefine some terms, like complacency into security, worry into stress, and happiness as material wealth. "But such is life, I don't want to change the world." But problems develop in our passive river front estate, when one of the kids pridefully determines to set their own path, or cancer threatens our life, or some other unexpected circumstance brings us anxiety about the future. Of course long ago we changed the definition of anxiety from a sin, to a personal weakness. We think that was a good choice.

In Deuteronomy Chapters 8 9, Moses chastens Israel on the east side of the Jordan, explaining to them where they have been and where they are now heading and the problems they will face in the Promised Land. A land where every piece of property lies within the Complacency drainage basin.

Our real problem with complacency is that we don't like the discipline that the Lord requires from our life, so we retreat from anything that makes us feel challenged. So we have not invented the terms cheap grace and sloppy agape, we just strive to live our lives in their application. And for the most part evangelical pulpits encourage us to do so, because it provides the pastor and his staff a sense of security also.

Deuteronomy 8:5 is really the crux of our fear: *You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you.*

Cheap grace and sloppy agape do not justify us before God's holy righteousness, so we fear He is going to spank us for our disobedience just like we deserve. Therefore, when we did wrong as kids, we hid in our rooms, and prayed earnestly that our parents would not find out what evil thing we had recently done. As adults we just go out and buy some new paint to enhance the beauty of our Complacency River estate.

But the rest of the passages in the Deuteronomy example go on to explain that it is not because of our righteousness that God is good to His children, but because of His goodness. In that light we

can, and should look as His chastening not as discipline as on the Religion river, but as training for temporal and eternal success.

For the most part we look at formal education as discipline for success. We should look at wilderness in the same light. But those neighbors, or the parents who lived beside the Religion never new the true meaning of God's grace. Therefore. we have been indoctrinated with their deathly view of faith, and we have no experience living in total security of God's grace alone.

These passages in Deuteronomy are of course in the Old Testament and meant for the Jewish people. Christians are not under law but under grace, therefore we are not like the stiff necked Jews, we have Jesus in our hearts and a relationship with Jesus based on God's love. That of course is where we stop in our complacency march. It might sell books and Cd's but it is an anathema to Biblical theology. The whole Bible is a book of God's love for His chosen people. We do not choose Him, He chose us by His grace to be His children. An His son Jesus Christ chose to die in my place, so that once I have affirmed His redemption in my life, I do not need to fear death.

Jesus in my heart and my relationship with Him is nothing but a politically corrected, dumbed down version of what my adoption by God as one of His children really means. As one of His kids, I will live forever, and forever includes today, because the sting of earthly death has been removed from my life. Therefore, I do not have to look for the perfect place on the Complacency, because I have a direction and an education to achieve. All I need to do is to live in His security and not my own, because it is His redemption and His justification that gives me. not only a right to walk without fear in death's valley, but also not to redefine reality to fit my limited understanding.

In my younger years I spent much of my time in the wilderness of God's creation. I learned that properly equipped there is nothing to fear except my own fears. However, I could not say the same for the urban jungle. There the wild animals are other people. But in that same

context my biggest challenge was to turn my natural fears over to God and allow His grace to strengthen me.

That is why in corollary, urban people need to have a natural wilderness experience. To see that our biggest hazard is not cougars, grizzly bears and sasquatches, but with our own desire to live a life along the Complacency or in its watershed. The Complacency only exist in our minds, so we must move beyond those shores into the reality of true desert wilderness. That is what we were created for, and that is the educational laboratory by which we truly begin to understand the meaning of life in general and our life in specifics. There, we also more deeply understand God's grace in giving us a community to help us overcome our stiff necked natures and the need for continual rendezvous.

We invite you to come an join us outside the Complacency drainage, in are real world wilderness adventure.

## Our last six Chronicles of Diversity articles:

Metis Economics: Dog Tales; PDF link: [http://www.wondersprings.com/2005pdffiles/metisdogtales4\\_20\\_5.pdf](http://www.wondersprings.com/2005pdffiles/metisdogtales4_20_5.pdf)

Metis Economics: Urbane Urban; PDF link: [http://www.wondersprings.com/2005pdffiles/metisurbaneurban4\\_27\\_5.pdf](http://www.wondersprings.com/2005pdffiles/metisurbaneurban4_27_5.pdf)

Metis Economics: Eclectic Flowers; PDF link: [http://www.wondersprings.com/2005pdffiles/metiselecticflowers5\\_4\\_5.pdf](http://www.wondersprings.com/2005pdffiles/metiselecticflowers5_4_5.pdf)

Rare Breed; PDF link: [http://www.wondersprings.com/2005pdffiles/rarebreed5\\_11\\_5.pdf](http://www.wondersprings.com/2005pdffiles/rarebreed5_11_5.pdf)

Creation College; PDF link: [http://www.wondersprings.com/2005pdffiles/creationcollege5\\_18\\_5.pdf](http://www.wondersprings.com/2005pdffiles/creationcollege5_18_5.pdf)

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