

# Chronicles of Diversity



## Metis Economics: Communion

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A critic of modern American evangelicalism once stated, “For some reason we (the church) think we save people, and God can do the body building. The truth is supposed to be the other way around.”

The body of Christ is supposed to share its oneness with Christ and one another in the celebration of Communion or the Lord’s Supper. “The Lord’s Body broken for you, let’s make sure we keep it that way until He returns.”

It wouldn’t be that bad if we took the above modified words of institution literally, and worked to maintain brokenness by design, but instead we have converted the highest sacrament, or ordinance, of the church into an example for natural entropy.

Now, for sake of discussion, if we had kept the Roman Catholic concept of Transubstantiation (the bread and wine are actually converted into the body and blood of Jesus Christ) then we would have to seriously look at what we do with communion leftovers. But instead we put the pieces of the broken crackers in a plastic baggie until they become Matzoh meal, or we just throw the wafers back in their storage bag. Praise the Lord for shelf life.

Then there are the disposable communion cups. Hygienically sealed in their plastic sleeves for one time use. “Make sure we have the garbage cans available after service, because the people will discard them anyplace. Who knows, we may have to hire a special janitor just on Communion Sunday to clean up the mess. Their may be a drop or two of Jesus’ blood remaining in the cups, but thank God its really only Welchs.”

The point of this discussion so far, is to suggest that we treat the Fellowship of Communion of the saints, much in the same way we treat the Fellowship of the Lord’s Table. Just something we have to do once of month, just so we can keep our church papers in order, so people won’t think we are a sect, or a cult.

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Paul's discussion of the first communion service in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 11, describes the time in which Jesus symbolizes his soon to be broken body, by broken unleavened bread and wine, as a type of memorial to his death on the cross for the sins of all mankind. Now some of the descriptive words in the preceding sentence may need to be modified or changed to fit the language of your own particular denomination, but in essence, this is what communion as a Christian tradition is all about.

We can point to a time almost 2000 years ago, during that Passover week, when this meal took place. The following link three days later, when the broken covenant was visibly restored on that Resurrection Sunday morning by Christ's return to life, we again relinquish to a one day festival. On that day alone, the greeting, "He is risen!" "He is risen, indeed!" is used to denote the one day of the year when the churches will be packed, with most of America's passive Christian community.

Christmas used to be considered one of those two packed church holidays, but for sake of modernity, all we are left with is Easter. And to celebrate in the tradition of Easter's pagan roots, we use this day of fertility to add to the true Christian flock, not to celebrate the Good News only for its own merit.

American evangelicalism has gotten so base, that a discussion of whether Calvin, or Arminius, or Luther were right regarding predestination, is greeted with only blank questioning stares. But Oh, the latest book or program, that might help us win the lost, will allow us to cross the country searching for emerging church seminars, or putting our name into the church raffle for a Hummer.

A search of Amazon.com returned 1757 books on the key word evangelism and almost 800 additional links. The top two on that book list were: "The Master Plan of Evangelism" by Robert E. Coleman; and "101 Ways to Reach Your Community" by Steve Sjogren. Now the interesting thing about both Coleman's classic, and Sjogren's more modern rendition, is as the reviews say, they are more interested in evangelism through discipleship, rather than evangelism through arm twisting.

However, both titles still have as their purpose the task of winning others to Jesus Christ by works, not the sovereignty of God's election. All this also assumes that unbelievers truly want a relationship with Jesus, different than the eternal one they now have. The problem with the church is that the witness of the church is not one of the Communion of Saints, or the Family of God's Love, but the cult of one call sale closers.

If you get beyond the free car wash, the oil change, the concert, you still find a dysfunctional institution not that much different from the country club, or the local casino, without the emphasis on the monetary dues, at least at the beginning.

For as long as I can remember I have been interested in community development, as loaded as that term may seem. I was trained in natural community ecology, and have sought to apply that synergy to human communities during all these years. As an individual who has lived most of my life in America, I have also been highly indoctrinated in the cult of individualism.

Like all evangelists of any persuasion, I have always believed that if we (I) just do a better job, that people will see the light and make the truly wise decision. What I am just beginning to see, is that those decisions are really not individual choices at all, but community choices.

God created each of us as a potentially good individual, with a role to play in His community. In the ultimate sense only that unity of unique individuality and a universal family community can begin to model God's glory. The problem with living in America, is if you hear the term universal family community, you smile, think of Hillary, and you muse that you have absolutely no cultural basis to know what a universal family community is. There are no models to emulate.

The church was called out to be that model. Instead of a community of communion, it seeks to serve only the individual, with programs to enlarge the cloister, rather than build the community based upon kingdom community values. There seems to be no love, because an institution build on self sufficiency truly doesn't need, nor does it understand the true ministry of the broken body of Jesus Christ and His blood, as a propitiation to God's holiness.

John Calvin, that old Reformation dude, had a concept of Guilt, Grace, and Gratitude. I don't know if his original French translated into the 3G's, but the important point of application to the church is that each step must build on the previous.

If you really aren't guilty of transgressing God's law, but just making a few wrong choices, the whole continuum breaks down. Similarly, if you only focus on the legalism of the law, you can never fully understand the concept of grace. And if you really do not understand the gospel of God's grace, through the Lord's Supper, and His bodily resurrection, you can not begin to fully understand the concept of Gratitude. Without Gratitude, you can not express the love of God in anyway other than individual programs, which do nothing to fulfill the community side of each person's created personality.

An example of how this community growth might take place became the topic of one of my conversations here in Spokane this last week. There seems to be a positive change in the attitude of Gonzaga University (Jesuit, Roman Catholic) students in the last decade, but especially in the last few years. "They are the nicest young people you would ever like to meet, they are into service and making the world a better place. Definitely not like the students at Eastern (Eastern Washington University, state sponsored) and Whitworth (Whitworth College, Presbyterian).

Now the question arises does this have anything to do with the university's rise in national basketball prominence? Along with that basketball rise, the University has developed a slogan, "Educating People the World Needs Most."

Now Roman Catholics have never seen the need to completely dispose of the concept of community and community service, as we Protestants have. They also have never walked down the revivalist path. I suppose if your tradition tells you that you remain the only true church, there is not the emphasis on change for the sake of cultural relevance, that we reformers almost take for granted.

But the point is that this change in the student population seems to be recent and not shown in other institutions of higher education in the area. As a Protestant we know that historically their doctrine is in an anathema, as is ours to them. Back to Calvin, we (personally and collectively) must make a decision on just how wide the grace of God really is.

If however, we look at the community desire built into each unique personality, you should be able to see, that doctrinal differences may not be as important as true community purpose, in determining where, and how we live our lives. It may relate to the specific revelation of God in Christian witness, or it may be Natural Law and Common Grace. Where we draw this line relates to the size of our God, and our personal religious convictions. Then again, perhaps to God there is no line at all.

Being raised in the Spokane area, my dad being a school administrator and a strong believer in the value of athletics as a leadership developmental tool, and having played a few hoops on my own, I have some insights into the University and the personalities that shaped the basketball program as it now exists.

All sports, but particularly basketball is significantly a mental game. Anyway to alter a shot by just a fraction of an inch, means the difference between "nothin' but net" and a long rebound. The best way to play the mental game is to get the shooter to think about something as he shoots the ball. What he (or she) is thinking about is not really all that important, that they are thinking about something is the important component. That something is the altering factor. Shooting mechanics may be analyzed as well as other aspects of the game, (team work, plays, passing, defense, etc.) but for the most part basketball is instinctive, reenforced by long hours of practice.

Therefore, winning is a function of winning skills, a winning attitude, and fundamental coaching to promote the team's best, by mixing individual skills and talents as the game continues. A winning basketball team and a winning university are not the result of God doing the team building, or as we said in the opening quotation, the body building. Winning, also does not always relate to the final score on the scoreboard at the end of the game, but the intensity and competitiveness by which you played the game.

I have known some churches that have slogans to save the world in some context. They don't translate into the real community because it is just a slogan that is not lived. Just another plastic wafer, or broken cracker, some grape juice, or some cheap wine, once a month. What is missing is communion, or the Lord's Supper, is supposed to be practice for the real thing.

That truly is something much more important than a nationally known basketball program, or university. But the facts are similar. It is God who ultimately knows who will sign the Letter of Intent,

or whose parents have the bucks to pay the tuition, or who has the grit to seek the scholarship, or walk onto the court and say, I can play for your program.

The church is not a force of community in the world, because it counts its success as doing God's work of salvation, and misses it's true calling. Taking credit for a dozen souls who accept Jesus at the Easter Sunday service, might be the only form of evangelism the church currently understands.

The true purpose of the church is to build the church not on faulty doctrines, but genuine love. This love doesn't come through osmosis, or revelation, or evangelism programs, it comes through perspiration, practice, hard work, and commitment. It is a team effort, and requires leadership to be the people the world really needs.

Leadership is, and always has been the source of positive change in this world.

### ***Other articles in this Phylogenesis Series:***

*Liquidity with purpose; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2004pdffiles/liquidty9-29-4.pdf>*

*Bottled Liquidity; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2004pdffiles/bottleliquid10-6-4.pdf>*

*Fakin it; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2004pdffiles/fakinit10-13-4.pdf>*

*Natural Energetics; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2004pdffiles/natureenergy10-20-4.pdf>*

*Political Energetics; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2004pdffiles/poleenergy10-27-4.pdf>*

*Reasoned Phylongeny; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2004pdffiles/reasonphylodg11-3-4.pdf>*

*Sasquatches & Polar Bears; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2004pdffiles/sasbears11-10-4.pdf>*

*51-48 gas; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2004pdffiles/51-48gas11-17-4.pdf>*

*Show me; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2004pdffiles/showme11-24-4.pdf>*

*A cheap plot; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2004pdffiles/acheapplot12-1-4.pdf>*

*Cheesy Cows; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2004pdffiles/chessycows12-8-4.pdf>*

*Raurbs versus Apgars; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2004pdffiles/raurbsapgars12-15-4.pdf>*

*Metis; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2005pdffiles/metis12-29-4.pdf>*

*The Complete (Natural) Metis; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2005pdffiles/completemetis1-5-5.pdf>*

*Metis Economics; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2005pdffiles/metisecon1-12-5.pdf>*

*Metis Economics, People; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2005pdffiles/metispeople1-19-5.pdf>*

*Metis Economics, Land; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2005pdffiles/metisland1-26-5.pdf>*

*Metis Economics, Water; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2005pdffiles/metiswater2-2-5.pdf>*

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