

# Chronicles of Diversity



*A Winter Metis Bridge*

## Metis Economics

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There is a saying in economic circles that “A rising tide lifts all ships.” As we learned last week that generalization is usually true, except, when that tide is a tsunami, or your ship has a hole in the hull, or the two happen together. In such circumstances your ship can be up a creek without a paddle, or stranded three miles from the sea. The normal can be planned for, the extremes may save, or kill you.

Last Sunday many churches celebrated Epiphany, which is to commemorate the baptism, or circumcision of the Lord, or the visitation of the three wise men. The actual feast day is January 6th, but generally an epiphany is also used to give context to expressions such as, “I see, said the blind man.”

My blindness has begun to epiphany over the last few weeks, but somewhere in these last few days, my vision of the why, and the wherefore, for my last couple of decades of life have taken on new meaning. The big landscape is beginning to emerge from the fog of uncertainty. “So that’s how, meshes with this, and they are joined with those, and together they become something.”

It is my long held contention there are almost unlimited possibilities currently available in Apgar country, the red counties of America, and elsewhere in the world. The problem lies, as in the failure of Democrat Party election candidates, with the inability to create viable economic enterprise, except from within the Raurb, Bobo, urban intellectual, developmental paradigm.

A new metis economic paradigm is needed to provide a natural law - common grace approach to locations in which natural environmental constraints in some way limit what is generally understood as economic growth. The Raurb term Sustainable Development can’t get you there, because it hopes to accomplish its goals without any significant change in lifestyle. “If we learn how to control the tides, everyone can have a modest ship, and live in the egalitarian utopia of oneness with Mother Earth.”

Wallace Stegner in his book, “Beyond the Hundredth Meridian: John Wesley Powell and the Second Opening of the West,” describes John Wesley Powell’s vision on how the west should have

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been colonized. To a certain extent, because that vision was never even attempted, we now have the right coast, the left coast, red and blue counties, raurbs and appgars, and a search for meaning in life, because the developed life is completely divorced from creation.

To restore some of that loss of roots, people have sought metis and wisdom to develop that connectedness to the earth that they yearn to find. This, in our definition of the Complete (Natural) Metis is an opportunity for everyone, especially the church, to become the catalyst for this third opening of the west, according to the principles of Metis Economics.

Metis Economics is also of value in third world countries. For there, as in the American West, the explorers came, followed by the colonizers, who abandoned these colonies after much of their natural wealth had been exploited, leaving the aboriginal peoples pretty much on their own economically. To a certain extent, the developed western culture has justified this as the right for national independence. Therefore, once the local economic booty was extracted, this Imperialistic outlook fostered, carrying it to its 21st century conclusion, militant, radical Islam.

So what does this third economic opening look like in Metis Economics?

Powell's vision was really about a unity between the people, the water, and the land. Powell gained these insights beginning with his boat trip through the Grand Canyon. Sounds like a modern metis adventure, except Powell was the first. This was further developed as he met extensively with the native tribes of the southwest. Finally, he tried to implement some of these concepts as Director of the U.S. Geological Survey.

Metis economics, as Powell understood, is a lot more than drawing maps, putting survey lines on them, these mile sized boxes becoming the basis for real estate development. Metis Economics finds its substance in the fact the community relationships between the people is truly determined by the land and the water, not the lines on the map. The development potential of the land to a high degree is determined by the availability of water. Therefore, land without water is of much less value than land with it.

In the abstract, this makes good sense, but to those educated in a culture where water is never a limiting commodity, the wisdom really is difficult to apprehend. If you add to this water paradigm, the concept, as fostered by all the native tribes, that the land can only belong to God, for lack of a better term, you see not so much a conflict in cultures, but a conflict of apprehended wisdom, in opposition to acquired knowledge.

If you look at that metis vision of heaven, Montana, east of the Continental Divide in that area of the short grass prairie, where Raurbs still only drive through or fly over even on vacation, you find that outside the small towns in the river valleys, that the population density living on the land is not that much different than when the free roaming bison were the economic security and the Indians lived a nomadic lifestyle. Today however, farmers live widely dispersed on many square sections of land growing grain, most of which is sent to midwest feed lots to feed cattle.

Economics is about money, or more precisely models on how money is to be applied. The world's economic theories are based primarily on the works of Adam Smith (1723-1790) and John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946). Both men were of British extraction and highly educated in rationality, logic, and philosophy, before they made their journey into economics and monetary theory.

Nowhere in their works, that I am aware of, do you find any reference to people, land, and water as much more than a commodity. Cutting to the core of the problem, our economic system is based essentially upon our worth as a commodity trader (of goods and services). We have no value in this world except as we fit into the greater economic picture, as an individual, or an enterprise participant. Therefore, we become successful to the extent we can obtain and utilize financial capital, either through equity, credit, or philanthropy.

The problem with the Apgar areas however, is that these regions because of their required community dependence on land and water, western economic theory (as in culture, not in land) plainly just doesn't work. There is no way you can locally get a Raurb ROI (return on investment), because the cash flow numbers don't add up. One or all of the metis economic requirements, of land, water, or community just are not there in the proper quantities, or qualities.

Therefore, just as in the third world, generally, if you want to live at more than subsistence, you have to go to the city to get a job. That is no problem in Raurb economics, except most of the world's land area becomes an economic desert with no liquidity. But does that mean that these areas are worthless, or does it mean we have rationally limited economic theories and applications?

We will deal more specifically with how a Metis economic theory will incorporate community, land, and water in following articles. For the remainder of this article let us look at a couple of enterprising dreams.

The late John Denver, song writer, singer, metis proponent of the American west, recorded a song by John Prine called Spanish Pipedream. The song discusses the love and life between a Vietnam era draft dodger, on his way to Montreal and a topless dancer. The chorus of the song follows:

*Blow up your T.V., throw away your paper.  
Go into the country, build you a home.  
Plant a little garden, eat a lot of peaches  
Try to find Jesus on your own.*

The final chorus states that they followed that dream, "Had a lot of children, raised them on peaches" and "They all found Jesus on their own."

Because there really is a lot of truth in these lyrics, in recent years, it has become politically incorrect to talk about Jesus in any fashion. Outside of the Raurb culture, and put into the context of a discussion I had last week, you don't need James Dobson, or Jerry Falwell to help you find Jesus. Again, in that same context, these two icons of American evangelicalism are a prime hindrance to even investigating the claims of Jesus and his community of followers.

However, I suppose if you really did blow up the T.V., (break up your radio), throw away your paper, move to the country, and built your home, you probably wouldn't know who we were talking about, and you would be more interested in fertilizing the peach trees than arguing with me about the evils of George Bush and his Christian right supporters. Amen.

Last night, I dreamed I went to a remote little town and toured a small manufacturing plant. The town in question did not have such a facility, for it was an abandoned mining or timber plant from the 20th century, and the town I knew did not have any such place. This plant however, built small aluminum travel trailer shells, similar in design to the very early Airstream trailers, only much smaller. Small enough to be easily towed by most compact cars.

You could either purchase these shells directly from the plant and finish it yourself, or have it finished by a craftsman referred by the company. In essence, these trailers were very light and aerodynamic and were about the size as what are generally referred to as tear drop trailers, loosely following the design of horizontal airplane wings. These wings were vertical however, allowing for standing room within. As a consequence they looked like inverted aluminum river drift boats, or dories, with very tall sides, a door and a few of windows.

I entered in through the back of the plant and looked at a number of designs and sizes as I slowly worked my way towards the front office. From the finished shells and through the break room I noticed at least 25 but less than 50 employees. As I passed through the door to the sales area, I awoke before I could get to the desk to find out how much the trailers cost in their various stages of completion.

Awake, I recounted what I had seen and what this might mean. The unique property of the early Airstreams was that they featured monocoque construction, in which the shell carries most of the structural strength. Adapting this same construction technique and increasing the structural integrity with composite sandwich laminations, you could build a very light and strong travel trailer that almost any modern vehicle could pull, as you traveled to your new metis destination. You could even camp on the prairies of Montana and not be too inconvenienced, or insecure.

So the question for myself and for you this next week: How would you write a business plan for such a product and its manufacturing facility, keeping in mind that traditional economic models probably won't work? You have very limited sources of capital from equity, debt, philanthropy, and government grants. A positive cash flow must come quickly. The work force is some what trained in mechanical skills, but their really isn't any local technical pool of workers. Your markets must be in raurb areas.

Raurb, Bobos will understand the importance of personal security and the essential comforts of home, when tickling the bears and driving their Lexus X model (Suv).

***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>*

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*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/metis12-29-4pdf>*

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