

# Chronicles of Diversity



## Metis Economics: Faith

2 February 2005; Volume 7, Issue 6

Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson go on a camping trip. They set up their tent, and are soon fast asleep. Some hours later, Holmes wakes his faithful friend. “Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you see.”

Watson replies, “I see millions of stars.”

“What does that tell you?”

Watson ponders for a minute. “Astronomically speaking, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, it tells me that Saturn is in Leo. Time wise, it appears to be approximately a quarter past three. Theologically, it’s evident the Lord is all powerful and we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, it seems we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you?”

Holmes pauses for a moment, shaking his head, then says, “Watson, you idiot, someone has stolen our tent.”

*(From Backwoods Home Magazine #66)*

Faith in terms of Metis Economics says for reasons completely beyond your control, when you awaken your tent will still be your covering from the extremes of the world. But it does bring up another question, “Watson, Could that tent be keeping you from gaining wisdom from God and His creation?”

One of my favorite golden oldies is “Brother Love’s Traveling Salvation Show,” by Neil Diamond. The funny thing about Brother Love, is back when the song was popular I had never been to a revival, or a crusade. “Sits a ragged tent, where there ain’t no trees,” a hot summer Bible belt evening, maybe with clear skies after a thunder and lightning show, a few fireflies providing flicks of light, and that rhythmic gospel group, priming you to come forward to “Get saved,” again, and again, and again.”

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You don't have to go to see the show, because in America, revival is part of your soul. "Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! Thank you, Jesus!"

What does that tell you, Watson?

People want to get saved, again. They like the music that gets down into your soul. They don't like the preaching, and they especially don't like the collection. But they keep coming back for some reason. Is it just Jesus, or is there still a deeper side we have yet to grasp?

Years later, and after being to a number of camp meetings, revivals, and crusades I noticed that much is still the same, except the tent is gone. Now everything is pretty much urbanized and in fixed facilities.

I suppose the tent wore out and it's much easier to preach to the throngs in the local civic arena. So to have a successful gospel meeting, you don't need the tent, the lightning and thunder, the rain, the fireflies, the humidity, and the sweat.

"Brother Watson, ain't it great how God has blessed this nation. We can drive to the meeting in air conditioned comfort. Hurry through the humid summer heat into an air conditioned auditorium, sit in real seats, padded in many cases, not wooden splintery benches, and still see the show. No pain, only gain, except for the preaching and that collection, but we can still come forward to get healed and slain in the spirit. I might even get to be on TV. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! Thank you, Jesus!"

Personally, I now know this is true because I have observed many of these meetings in person and interviewed many of the participants. Perhaps, a crime had been committed?

One evening while flipping through the channels I came across one of these televised events and decided to watch carefully for content, to see what education the Lord may have for me. I have to admit I didn't find anything in the singing or the message that bothered me. I was troubled however, by the evangelist waving his arm over the crowd and saying, "Catch the anointing!" After which many people fell on their backs, slain in the spirit.

I don't see backward slaying in the spirit in my Bible, everyone who has a true experience with God in the Bible always falls forward in reverence. As it was time for the taped offering spiel, I decided it was time to flip the channels. But I remember asking, "Lord, that falling really bothers me, but I don't understand?"

I only hit a couple of channels when I came across an interview with comedian Steve Martin. It just so happened that Steve was on the show to discuss his new movie, "Leap of Faith." I learned that this movie was about a Brother Love type gospel preacher. When they showed a clip from the movie there was Brother Steve waving his arm over the crowd and saying, "Catch the anointing!" After which most people fell on their backs, slain in the spirit.

I guess the Lord didn't take long to answer that prayer. He saw something wrong with catching the anointing also. "Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! Thank you, Jesus!"

I had to see that movie to perceive what else I might glean from this divine comedy. Near the end of the movie Brother Steve has a conversation with a young man who God had truly touched through the gospel show, but he was having trouble reconciling the show with God's touch upon his life.

The essence of Brother Steve's remarks were: "There is the show and then there is a reality behind the show. Just because all we can see is the show doesn't mean that the reality of God doesn't exist."

Watson, What does that tell you?

God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform. Or is there still a deeper side we have yet to grasp?

After the State of the Union address, Brother George took to the road with a more secular traveling salvation show. Brother George's Traveling Social Security Salvation Show was a real hit at the locations where he made stops.

As with all revivals the audiences were made up almost entirely of the saved. As a consequence, just as in religious crusades, there was a lot of show and little of substance. And as with the movie "Leap of Faith," we are left with little idea of what is reality. Personally, I find the whole thing much ado about not a whole lot.

Taking four percent of something, to someday invest in secure securities seems to be an expensive carnival for not a whole lot of fun. For example, if you make \$10,000 per year, you won't have enough to invest at all, and if you make \$100,000 a year, if you are only investing four percent in something above and beyond Social Security taxes, you deserve to retire with nothing more. The truth of the matter however, is that Americans are so wealthy in comparison to the rest of the world, that by those worldly standards, we all waste at least four percent of our incomes on trivial frivolities.

What is at stake here is the same principles that made revivalism a dynamic force in America. That being the clash of cultures. On the one hand you have our vision of the self made personality. On the other you have the community structure of literally social security.

In this battle however, the lines have been somewhat redrawn. The rugged self sufficient frontier settler, has been replaced by the well monied (shall we say greedy) Raurb. This is contrasted with the less wealthy Apgars, who know that they may sometime, need something, from a benevolent somebody, that they do not know.

Putting this in context, neither Brother George, or his opponents in this crusade have any concept of what it means to be poor. Therefore, the solution is either less taxes, or more taxes depending upon the political spin, and because of these extremes, the discussion of the price of effective government cannot even be considered.

The real questions are Watson, "What does the tent look like, and what does this mean?"

I know the answer lies with God's wisdom, not man's knowledge.

In my daily readings of C. S. Lewis this year, so far I have been struck with his comprehension of the differences between God and man. To Lewis, God and His love, are represented in the ever expanding universe, and for reasons truly known to God alone, an object of His love is to share the wisdom of that grandeur with mankind.

Since you ask Watson, my take of this, relates to the incredible blessings God has poured out on this nation. Therefore, it should be no surprise to everyone that we have trouble coming to grips with these blessings. To whom much is given, much is asked. The solution requires a big community tent, large enough to include some friends and also God. Holmes and Watson perhaps you needed to bless more than yourselves?

We are still struggling with the expanding frontier, the rugged self reliant individual, versus the community dweller of utopian bliss. When you look at the founding of this nation those early colonists and settlers came here almost exclusively to have the freedom to fight this battle. What makes it so complex for us today is that those early absolute rights that were self evident to the founding fathers and mothers, have basically through apathy on the part of the citizenry, been abdicated to government in all its forms.

Contrary to the wishes of us all, we will not solve this problem on our own, because really the struggle is with our inner personality. God created each of us with this personality. For really as Lewis tries to relate, it is also God's nature. Totally powerful and totally loving and compassionate. This is a problem of faith, not of nature. To the extent we try to solve it only naturally, means failure, naturally.

Personally, I am mediocre in more things than anyone I know. Consequently, in all these areas I am always at my best. I suppose in the context that we are talking about, that makes me a self reliant person. But what I am really just beginning to realize, the more I learn and the less mediocre I become in certain areas, more of me desires to share that blessing with others. I can't give it away like a tent because it was a gift and I didn't earn it, so I have to keep it, maintain it, and share it, it gets very complex in a hurry, well beyond my mediocre understanding.

I'm just speculating, but that probably drives Brother George also. He knows bondage in a way I can't begin to understand. In his case it was alcohol, not Saddam, but freedom is freedom, none the less. This Social Security thing, may stem from that same conflict of growing up a rich, privileged, Ivy League preppie, and passably understanding that this gift allowed him, who many would consider a mediocre man, to become a successful President.

So Watson we have discovered why the tent is missing. We don't need it at least tonight. And when we need a tent we shall obtain a more appropriate one. The thing we seem to have missed on this camping pilgrimage we call life, something that Abraham learned from God's wisdom, we don't need

the French Chateau to be fulfilled in fact it might get in the way. What we really need, is to pass on our blessings, whatever they may be.

Actually, we learn, as Watson now confesses, that while Holmes was sleeping, Watson gave the tent away, to someone less fortunate travelers than the gifted detective duo. As Watson fell asleep under those stars he was able to contemplate his blessings in a deeper and more Godly way, just as he related to Holmes when awoken.

So for some Metis Economics homework for both you and me.

1. Why do you, (me, we) find it so hard to do anything but to hoard our blessings?
2. Natural Law and Common Grace are absolute gifts given to each human personality who has ever lived. How can you better demonstrate your understanding of that freedom, by loving others toward the wisdom of those blessings?
3. What steps can you take as a unique human personality to demonstrate God's glory by lovingly sharing all your gifts with others?

***Share the love, pass them on!***

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