



Chronicles of Diversity

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Stupendous Change: *The Pointing Finger*

Well, last week's headlines turned out to be understatements. Even more pointing to the fact that Stupendous Change is part of this life that has been completely ignored by everyone.

So what is Stupendous Change?

Stupendous Change is an alteration of life so colossal that we can, or will not look at it in any fashion without the consequences being beyond our possibility to process the quantity and quality of the information rationally. We recognize our stupidity, or are stupified in the face of an awesome power we cannot comprehend. As a result we are either humbled or become defiant.

Last week we saw both a humbling and a violent defiant rage happen, primarily in New Orleans, but elsewhere on the Gulf coast.

Perhaps the best comment from the scene came from a sitting, exhausted, rescue worker outside the Superdome. "We are part of a disaster of Biblical proportions."

Biblical proportions are synonyms for Stupendous Change? Notice the plural, for we have to compartmentalize everything in order to do anything beyond to sit in silence and groan.

Should that statement be true, why are not Biblical proportions taught in any of the churches?

Simply put, Biblical proportions are not part of contemporary Christianity. We have materialistic Christianity, revivalist Christianity, pietistic Christianity, reformation Christianity, charismatic Christianity, pentecostal Christianity, Roman Catholic Christianity, the list is virtually



endless, and the combinations complex and disturbing, but no Christianity teaches true Biblical proportions. Simply put, contemporary twenty first century Christianity worships a God of its own creation. A God that is not continually Stupendous, or Awesome, but a God, who either treats me like a Yorkshire Terrier, or the reverse.

Does this mean that Christians are not compassionate and loving in their response to everyone affected by Hurricane Katrina and her aftermath? On the contrary, we are seeing and will continue to see Christians across the hodgepodge listed above working together to help those in need, who are suffering, and have no place to turn. Perhaps this stupendous happening will long term bring about some change in the giving and serving habits of all American Christians. But the church is much better with re words, therefore reaction fits more with the modern church than action.

The question is truly one of leadership. Who else is going to lead in times of Biblical, Stupendous Change, than the church whose doctrines state that the whole of the Bible is the Word of God?

I personally have not heard any Christian leader state up to this time that this catastrophic event was a judgement of God on a sinful nation. However, if and when they begin to be more readily reported, it be best to lump these with other cause and effect scenarios I have heard such as the war in Iraq, and failure to sign the Kyoto Accord on global warming. Their proponents are trying to bring attention to themselves to further their specific agendas and to show their own stupendous lack of the gifts of wisdom.

Before we continue it would be well to look at the nature, nature of the Gulf coast and the Mississippi River Delta and New Orleans. God made it as a swamp, a vast wetland, a place where periodic floods produced a rich soil, an estuary, and a rich surrounding subtropical sea. Into God's creation the French exiled the dregs of their society to get their disturbing influence out of France. In 1927 a flood of the Mississippi River devastated much of this delta downstream from New Orleans by destroying their levees to

save the city. This time, political neglect and gross ineptitude, and a near miss Category 4 hurricane, did not miss the opportunity to touch the Big Easy with a truth of natural reality.

Hopefully, before any rebuilding actually takes place, we should look seriously at the cost of rebuilding a city where a city should not be built. This rebuilding price truly makes no simple rational sense. This is especially true when the levee standards of a Category 5 hurricane, in an era where the current world warming trend cannot be denied, only its stupendous causes and consequences debated, the biases of religious paradigms, redefined as political and scientific knowledge and wisdom, become paramount.

We should also learn from the abysmal results of the federal government's intervention into housing during the era of urban renewal. We need not repeat those disasters in human engineering again for the sake of human arrogance against the nature of the area.

As I was researching this article I did a search of the Bible for the relationships between people and various forms of stupendous change. I found really too many to use, in a way almost a stupendous diversity of sources, all related to man doing his thing, instead of following God's way. Most of these very specific detailed accounts are in the prophetic books.

Now the genre of current Biblical teaching points these prophesies in one of two ways.

The first is that these prophesies are meant for Israel. This could mean, depending on the source, in the era before the first coming of Christ, after his coming and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, or the remaining Jewish remnant during the Great Tribulation and perhaps the millennial reign of Christ on the earth.

The second is that these prophetic Books are really allegory, and not to be taken seriously by Christians for we are under Grace not under the Law. Any true application of these principles will only take place after the rapture of the church and apply to those left behind, Jew and Gentile.

One such discussion I had with a Pastor concerning the Olivet Discourse Matthew 24 and Mark 13, Luke 21 sometimes linked, takes place on

the Temple Mount . My point was that these are statements made by Jesus himself concerning the time just before he returns and that there may be some application for our day. There should be no discussion that they have only an Old Testament application. The response I got from this pastor was that Jesus was talking to His disciples, all Jewish believers, and therefore these events must take place after The Rapture. To which I responded when Jesus was having this discussion there were no Gentile believers. How can you so grossly misstate the natural exegesis of the passage? To which my response was, "I never thought of that."

I don't imagine that Brother Love will get much of an audience in the Superdome for a few years preaching that, "There is nothing that needs to happen prophetically, before The Rapture occurs and we will get to be with Jesus." Either Brother Love needs to revamp his theology, or the residents of New Orleans, need to get the Rhema word that the polluted swamp they have dealt with was really an example of the Spirit ridding their world of the devil's influence in the area.

Should Brother Love listen to his anointing, I doubt that he will also hold a crusade in the area where he states all you need to do is to ask Jesus into your heart and Jesus will implement His wonderful plan for your life. When you want your heart to fail and still you know that it won't, you might begin to question whether a life of this stuff is what Jesus was referring to when He died for your sins.

How is church leadership, and should the leadership fail, how should Christians be able to lead, not only the church, but the whole of society in times of Biblical Stupendous Change?

James 1:5 probably succinctly states it best: If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Of course this only works to the point that you must continue to act, not react to the wisdom of the stupendous you shall receive. Essentially that means a lot of nonessential stuff needs to be discarded and then move forward only in God's Providence, not your interpretation

and reaction to what you think God requires.

There was a catastrophic failure of leadership all along the Gulf Coast and specially New Orleans and Louisiana for a few days after Katrina hit. It has been stated by the real military presence which is now restoring order, that the first responders were also victims of the storm. Generals would not be Generals if they were not good at such political interpretations. That political spin might spin on the easily manipulated news media, but the revered Generals would have never made it into the Officer Corp with such twisting of the facts. There is really no excuse, at any level, for the lack of redundant systems in command and control and competent leadership by individuals. The natural infrastructure can and does fail, but only the dead have no tales to tell about their rescue, because of this systematic gross incompetence.

True leadership demands that you look beyond the comfortable, the politically expedient, even into the stupendous, to see if there is anything you can do to accomplish the mission. Clearly in Katrina's case everyone stopped at, "God willing it will never happen on my watch. Therefore, I will not be alarmist and ever look seriously at the 'potential' problem."

However, this is all worldly leaders can ever do, because that is all that is required in their job description. When things happen beyond their scope of work or knowledge, they can moan and groan, whine and pout, "work really hard to fix the problems," but they were not created to understand the un understandable.

The church on the other hand was created to deal with the stupendous. The first example in the Bible, of Noah, dealt with a man building a big boxy boat, over a hundred years, to deal with a flood which really was a stupendously undefined reality. We speak today of Noah's faith, but it really was completely beyond his comprehension what was about to take place. Just as it is today beyond our comprehension of what did take place during the flood and the short but undefined period after the flood before recorded history becomes distinct about 4000 years ago.

I now face a stupendous challenge to me. To try to build a Christian leadership training school

in Montana. I know I can create a training atmosphere in that area, where potential leaders can face controlled experiences to them, that seem as terrifying as Hurricane Katrina, it all depends upon the level of stupendous you have faced in the past, natural or imagined. A little imagination more than makes up for a lot of natural reality.

Put another way, when the most challenging aspect of your daily choice is deciding what flavor of latte you will have in the morning, people need their pedantic lives interrupted by adventures that broaden their world view to such an extent that they may begin to believe they were created for something better than a continually consuming wuss. Once that miracle is achieved, God only knows what they may do to change the world into a better place in the midst of stupendous change.

The nature of the church is that this vision can and will not happen much beyond where it is today without your help. I have designed as much of the ark as I know how to do on my own and with the limited help I have been able to intimidate, persuade, manipulate, and yes, just simply ask. These plans can be financially self sustaining or completely a supported ministry. I believe that Katrina is a wake up call for the church to move beyond the understandable and live, lead, and love in a world subject to Stupendous Change until Jesus returns.

The message of the most Stupendous Change the world has ever known took place about 2000 years ago, when God came down from heaven in the form of a man, died on a cross for our sins yours and mine. Rose from that death and ascended to heaven to forever justify me before His Father. When pondering such a Stupendous Change in the history of creation, Wonder Springs must erupt from the Death Valley of your soul.

Before and after that time, space, matter interruption, we all tried and try to create our own paths to be reunited with God, or to distance ourselves as far as possible from His presence. Naturally, we all have failed. It is not our religion that saves us and adopts us as God's children, it is God's grace alone. Our own

desire to become God in our own likeness makes the failures in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast look very minor.

However, it is time for the hodgepodge of churches to provide the leadership to lead a remnant out of the natural big easy swamp toward higher and safer ground. In the eternal picture of Stupendous Change it has little to do with the city we call the Big Easy, but the allegory should hit each of us squarely in the face with a bucket of stench laced toxic water.

The Katrina legacy will continue to develop naturally into a swamp of finger pointing mud, but with proper Godly leadership, we can move to fertile valleys where in God's creative wonder, were once lake bottoms and swamps. We can train church leaders in those Montana valleys, as many writers have coined, "Heaven on earth," or take another Stupendous choice that God may lay before our path and wonder "Why do bad things happen to good people, and I am naturally a good person."

But to coin a famous poetic verse that many believe is an eternal path parable:

*I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence
Two roads diverged in a wood
And I took the one less traveled by
And that has made all the difference*

Robert Frost

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