



# Chronicles of Diversity

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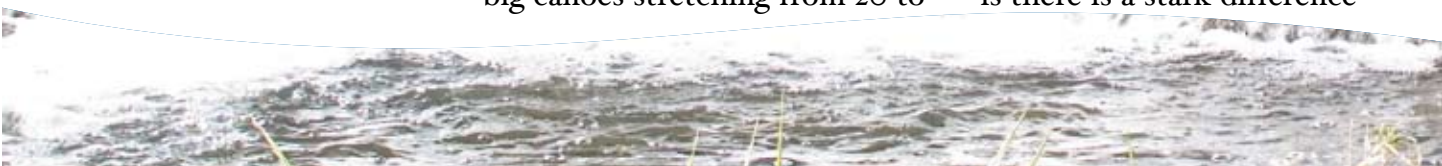
## Thesis 5: Justification

For those of you anxiously anticipating a 21st century version of Little Red Riding Hood and the big bad wolf, you are going to have to wait at least another couple of weeks. To put Ms. Hood in proper perspective I need to spend a little time describing the world in which our heroine dwells. For if we do not fully understand the stupendous changes that allow this great sheep to wolves paradigm shift, we may not be able to adapt successfully to those changes when they occur in our own lives.

A couple of things happened to me last week that refocused my efforts along those preparedness ministry lines. First, was that I was able to go and look at some of the big canoes I envision for leadership development wilderness programs. Western Canoe and Kayak in Abbotsford, BC, is one of the world's top makers of quality fiberglass type canoes. In addition, they make of full line of big canoes stretching from 20 to

41 feet. I was looking for a boat that could be handled relatively easily and travel rapidly with five or six paddlers, and be utilitarian enough that canoes for twenty plus people could be carried on one trailer. The canoe they make that fits this description is the Mariner at 22 feet. I figure since it is just the size I was looking for and has been purchased for pretty much the same reasons by the Boy Scouts of greater Los Angeles and the Dogrib Community Service Board in the Northwest Territories, there are good reasons to believe this is the way to go.

Also, I was able to finally understand why I think the Lord would want this ministry to develop an independent Wilderness Center. I have been looking at retreat centers and potential sites for same for probably 20 years. From Oregon to Alaska and from the Pacific Coast to Montana. What finally got through my very thick head is there is a stark difference



between a retreat center and a wilderness center as I believe the Lord would have it developed.

Retreat centers are developed pretty much on the theme of the American Dream and the Frontier. That is the wild is subdued to make it hospitable, the more the better to the retreaters. The best of these allow you to view nature's grandeur, while sipping your favorite beverage from a deck, or better yet an enclosed atrium. Between you and creation is placed, a well manicured lawn with imported or exotic plants. To keep the bugs at bay, wetlands are drained and an appropriate environmental control agent is applied. Therefore, retreat centers are designed to give you all the comforts of home, with just a better view.

A wilderness center in contrast, is designed to hit you in the face not with common grace, but natural law. You might have slept well in a fine bed, but once you wake up and your feet hit the floor you are hit in the face with the fact that this isn't home. In a wilderness center the design is to allow you to focus on pilgrimage rather than the destination. In other words pretty much everything you do is designed to stretch you as a person, as a part of a stretching community, which includes God's creation. You are expected to grow rather than stagnate. Whether this is a vacation from your daily job, I suppose depends on what you do to collect a pay check, but everything in a wilderness center is designed to allow you to cope better with the uncertainties of life wherever they may occur.

The new Little Red Riding Hood will spend a great deal of her time at such a wilderness center, learning how to love and live with wolves, both natural and reborn. Therefore, after Ms. Hood's introduction in a few weeks, we will introduce you to more of the facts and prerequisites on why time spent in a wilderness center will equip you better for stupendous change. Except perhaps taking one of our leadership development canoe trips, these wilderness center times will change and refocus your life significantly. However, since all these endeavors are impossible without the help of a community of faith, Ms. Hood needs a real place to visit and some leadership training to show others that the old Ms. Hood bad wolf tale is just a fantasy with no basis in truth.

We talked briefly last week about Calvin's concept of guild, grace, and gratitude, transcending greatly Calvinism's TULIP. This thankfulness which leads one into good and Godly works is based upon the proper understanding of God's principles of contrasting law and gospel. Law and gospel are not just the Old versus New Testament, but also within the context of specific sections of scripture. In most cases a Biblical passage that contains an element of law will also be followed with a portion that illustrates God's grace and mercy. But in order to truly move from guild to grace into gratitude, you need to properly understand the concept of justification.

Justification is not really part of the doctrine of modern evangelicalism. Within the concept of law gospel law, that is so prevalent in most of our movement churches, justification doctrine essentially states that you justify yourself by your good works and attitudes.

Even in those rare places where the doctrine of justification is properly understood and taught, it still doesn't get enough attention. Part of that is that a great many good churches teach the Bible by book rather than topically, and justification as a concept just doesn't get used that much as you study through the Bible. But our topical messages don't talk about justification enough either. I for one have written approximately 350 of these messages, but none of them have been entitled just justification. I could probably also go back and do a word search to see how many times I have used the word in any context, but the thought of that brevity is probably more than I can bear. The term justification itself is only used three times in the Bible, in Romans 4 & 5. Justified is used thirty seven times, all but five in the New Testament.

There is another division in the Bible other than Old and New Testaments. The New Testament is further broken down into the gospels and the epistles in which we will include the Book of Acts. In that context, the epistles are the gratitude part that changed the known world in less than a century, and is still the only positive force in Christianity. Of those thirty three times in the New Testament, five are used in the gospels pretty much as in the common meaning of the word, those in the epistles relate more to the doctrine of Biblical justification.

So just what is justification? Traditionally, evangelicals have defined it simply as “Just as if I had never sinned.” While in context that is technically true, it is also simplistic in that there is a situational context that can be construed that I have within myself the option of not sinning, and ergo, if I quit sinning I can thereby justify myself. If we are not careful, guilt, grace, and gratitude, becomes guilt, grace, and guilt again, as we are unable to fulfill our attempts to live a holy life through our desired piety.

The proper context of justification, must deal with Christ’s righteousness being imputed to me a sinner. What we don’t like to hear is that even though I am saved in the Christian sense, I remain a sinner. We have Wesleyan doctrine to thank for the concept that we can live the sinless life on this earth. However, John himself would be appalled that his striving through piety to work out his progressive sanctification, has been altered into a scheme for self righteousness and legalism.

Roman’s 8:1: [There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.](#)

To not be condemned as one of those who are in Jesus Christ, we must properly understand the contrast between the flesh and the Spirit mentioned here and as the chapter continues. The first thing to put in context is that the gospel occurred once in time, space, and matter. It is finished. That means that we can not add to it. If you try to add to the gospel you are walking according to the flesh and that thereby limits your freedom from condemnation.

The gospel has two parts, first Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world, second he was raised from the dead, providing evidence that our justification leads to eternal life Romans 4:25 . As we walk in the Spirit as in Roman’s 8:1 we must therefore walk in the Spirit of eternal life. What that means in context, if we focus upon sin as in the Old Testament, or in the gospels, it must be viewed as presented in the context of a pre gospel presentation, not terms of post gospel, post Pentecost. Sin must be condemned! Again this leads us to the law

gospel law scenario and our focus naturally shifts from the great commission at the close of the gospels, to various forms of self righteous piety as the goal of the gospel, which the context of all scripture clearly points to as an anathema. However, post gospel, post Pentecost, or the church age is an era in which all the epistles apply. There is no condemnation in Jesus Christ as redeemed, justified, adopted, children of God, except what we in error self righteously heap on ourselves as fleshly sinners. I repeat for emphasis, there is no condemnation in Jesus Christ as redeemed, justified, adopted, children of God.

The self righteous will quickly state that this is antinomianism. To which the response is that they don’t understand gratitude in Calvin’s concept and perhaps even grace and justification. Gratitude could also be defined as freedom but not license, and these pious servers are only free to make their judgments, but they are not free indeed, as the gospel truly promises and delivers.

Therefore, the real reason that we live in a Post Christian culture is that the church has become a religion of works sanctifying our efforts in the flesh, just like all the other world religions. That is why so many, including so many Christians, believe that all religions lead to heaven, because the only difference in all the world’s great religions, is a spin about piety and some paradigm on how it relates to you and your eternal future.

The church that is built by Jesus Christ however, is signified by those who walk by faith in the Spirit of that eternal heavenly Jerusalem. Their focus is not on themselves, but on the gratitude of being justified into a new life, which is a far different pilgrimage, than the life in this world. These are the people who walk by faith as described in the faith chapter of Hebrews 11.

So how does this relate to our redeemed Ms. Red Hood? The Bible is broken into Chapters for the ease of us to find things, but we find a similar context of Romans 8:1 in Hebrews 12:1,2:

[Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him](#)

endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

In that context, freedom from condemnation comes to us from God, and the proper understanding of all of Romans 8 and Hebrews 12 comes from the walk in faith that is based upon the principle of justification of Christ's righteousness imputed to me a sinner. It is by that imputation of Christ's righteousness that is the non condemning power, for lack of a better word, that gives me the faith to move beyond my still real fleshly existence.

This relates to our Ms. Hood in the later part of Hebrews Chapter 12 in verses 22-29.

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.

This Hebrews quote of Haggai speaks of a time that is coming that Ms. Hood believes she will endure either naturally or spiritually, but definitely not as a judgement of God for sin. This will be a time of stupendous change for Little Red, but she is confident in the fact that her faith rests entirely on the finished work of Jesus Christ and it will not be shaken, changed,

or altered no matter what may occur on this earth. Her eternal home is in that New Jerusalem, along with countless others throughout time who also have made that temporal pilgrimage to eternal life. And because of the gratitude she has received that justifies her present life, Little Red Riding Hood, circa 2006 and into eternity, can love and truly serve God and others without fear of her still too persistent sinful flesh.

## Our latest Chronicles:

*Thesis One: No heavy lifting?; PDF link: [http://www.wondersprings.com/2006pdffiles/thesisone1\\_4\\_6.pdf](http://www.wondersprings.com/2006pdffiles/thesisone1_4_6.pdf)*

*Thesis Two: Movements; PDF link: [http://www.wondersprings.com/2006pdffiles/thesistwo1\\_11\\_6.pdf](http://www.wondersprings.com/2006pdffiles/thesistwo1_11_6.pdf)*

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