



Chronicles of Diversity

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Thesis 2: Movements

Since Chronicles of Diversity is written from a Christian perspective, it is easy to get so focused upon problems within the church that we lose the perspective of a broader and more systemic problem within all of American culture. Whether one causes the other I suppose is debatable, as is whether one can change the other.

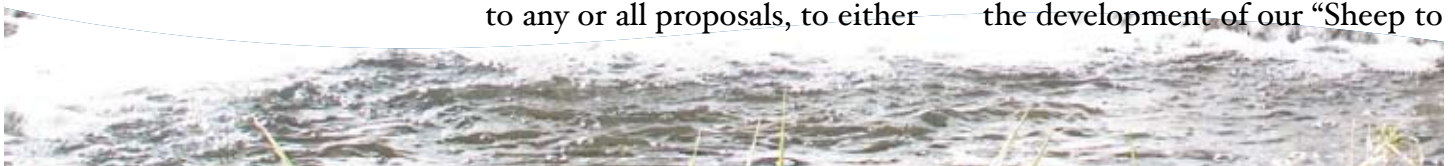
This great revelation came last week as we were riding in a Volvo over to Coeur d' Alene Lake from Spokane to view the Bald Eagles. As we were passed by numerous jacked up four wheel drive pickups and similar, less than fuel efficient vehicles, and a smattering of new hybrids, the discussion turned toward America's energy policy. With the recent deaths in the coal mine back east, the negative vibes from what was wrong with using coal began the discussion. As we proceeded into the foreign country of Idaho, we came convinced that there was at least some significant group opposed to any or all proposals, to either

increase energy supplies, or to limit energy usage.

Coupled with that, is this naïve concept within the general populace, that if we recycle bottles, cans, and paper, and put some little wind gadgets on top of all the utility poles in the world, we will solve our energy and environmental quandaries.

During my time of study while on my broken hand sabbatical, I read an article describing how that we are no longer forming new church denominations, or other such religious institutions, but we are following movements. Movements start with all sorts of hope and then over time slowly fizzle out, to be replaced by another movement, and on goes the cycle, or the continuum.

Beyond that article, follows the concept that we broached last week, that part of the reason that this occurs, is that somehow the movement is hijacked by a wolf in sheep's clothing. In line with the development of our "Sheep to



Wolves” program, normally the wolf, was once a good leader within the sheep community.

Whether you consider the environmental movement a religion or not is a topic for another time, but it is apparent to see that there are special interests within environmentalism, just as within the church who have lost focus on what we are supposed to be doing. Environmentalism is supposed to be about stewardship, the church is supposed to be about the gospel. Rather than those freeing concepts however, we also find besides the wolves, an accompanying rise of negative fundamentalism. The once well meaning leadership, with their emphasis on works righteousness, have lost their accountability to their ideals, and in extension those they claim to serve.

If you look scientifically at both the evangelical and environmental movements, you will see they reproduce by propagation rather than from normal plant reproduction, via seeds. Cultivars of most of our fruits come from a single original shoot that was either a natural mutation, or now a genetic alteration performed in the laboratory. Iris are perhaps one of the best known propagated flowers, reproduced from a rhizome, but there are a lot of flowers and food stuffs that we propagate rather than seed. Some of this is completely natural such as quack grass, but most of these propagated varieties are heavily modified by man’s ingenuity.

Furthermore, if you look back at mid 20th century environmentalism there was the desire to save old growth ecosystems not only for ascetics but also for their genetic complexity. The 1962 book “In Wildness is the Preservation of the World” used photographs and literary excerpts to show our natural affinity for things wild and beautiful, even if we only saw it in pictures in coffee table books. The title and many quotations are from Henry David Thoreau. The actual title comes from his small book “Walking.”

Thoreau, most famous for his book Walden, describes the brief time he spent living in a small cabin on Walden Pond, a short distance outside the Boston/Cambridge area of Massachusetts. From that book comes another familiar quotation, “Most men live

lives of quiet desperation.” Movements by their very nature eventually provide desperation through their propagation methods, because eventually true seed will be required for natural the reproductive processes to continue.

New England was home at that time for an early “movement” known as Transcendentalism. Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and others were trying to philosophically establish a spiritual connection between nature and man’s spiritual side that had been ignored by both the church and pure naturalistic explanations for how the world actually operates. So what we see in that movement, are some of the patron saints of our modern moral deistic culture. The wildness book becoming the linked beginning, or reinvention of this deeper movement concept within the complexities of the 1960’s culture.

What I want to point out in all this however, is what happens from the wild to the domesticated. We, in our human capacity for selection, just as in the process of natural selection, simplify the natural genome. Therefore, wildness becomes of prime importance to maintain the natural genetic diversity in a gene pool, because of our further desires to develop the world.

When we look at dogs, wild wolves are the most complex genetically. In the light of the Bible, when God created the kind, “dogs,” that critter looked and acted more like our modern wolves than any other dog that is around today. Wolves in their communities live successfully in some of the most wild and difficult areas of the earth. Some of our modern domesticated dogs need to be kept in close proximity to a veterinarian just to keep Fido alive. Fido’s medical bills may surpass our own. We might perceive Fido as being a nice little doggie, but in the real world, Fido might not make it through the night alone in the backyard because of his breeding.

As humans we fear what we can’t control. Most of man’s problems with wolves is that they look at our domesticated stock as just their easy meal, rather than our livelihood. So is the problem naturally with the wolves, or that we have bred stupid domesticated sheep?

Just as a sidelight, in Matthew 25 when Jesus talks about separating the sheep from the goats at the final judgement, there is a natural side that

commentators miss. Domestic sheep always need a shepherd, many domestic goats do not. While some domesticated goats will perish in the wilderness, many have succeeded in becoming feral if abandoned by man. In short, goats have not been as significantly bred, or domesticated for certain characteristics as have sheep. Since Jesus is the only Good Shepherd we find that the sheep that hear his voice, might be perceived as goats by undiscerning wolves in sheep's clothing. Simply because they don't act and dress like most sheep? Something to ruminate upon if you so wish.

So to conclude this movement discussion. Movements come and go because they don't have the natural genetic diversity to exist outside man's efforts of propagation. A church plant is really not planting a church seed, so much as taking a little piece of an existing church and moving it to another area, sticking it in the ground, and hoping and praying it will grow. This is how we have developed the whole nondenominational church movement that many Americans find favorable today. The concept is that nondenominational churches are led by the spirit, rather than the wisdom of man. But does the fact that we propagate these bodies, rather than truly seed them, condemn this movement and really mean that these churches are cursing their own future for the folly of man, as opposed to the true wisdom of God?

Existing along side these Christian movements however, we find Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant Denominations. These organizations as a general rule are more concerned with reproducing via information, or shall we say an extremely simplified genetic code, than are the movement Christians. Contrasted with movement churches, these organizations have structured requirements for pastors. In most cases, no matter by what name you call the institutions, to be a pastor you need a college degree, and then some sort of post graduate study in a seminary or a cemetery if you so wish.

Similarly, we also see a distinction between what is called high and low church. Higher churches also have a more historical liturgy.

The liturgy in a low church is normally just as structured organizationally as in a higher church, it is just that the components are decided somewhat spontaneously. Thereby promoting the transitory nature of their movement status?

The movement role in culture is not as outwardly successful as its leaders would like us to believe, because of the very natural genetics of the movement. From what I understand, if Judge Alito is confirmed to the Supreme Court, five of the nine members will be conservative Roman Catholics. Harriet Miers, President Bush's evangelical Christian Supreme Court nominee, was looked upon by her critics, as unqualified and a lightweight. What is important in this discussion is not the merits of Ms. Miers, but the role that information paradigms play in shaping culture.

Movements tend to believe that their simple information paradigm can change culture from without. "If the world is covered in quack grass, the whole world will be a green meadow." However, actual change is brought about at a much deeper level, the level of cultural education. This paradigm truly utilizes the mind as well as the spirit. Movements could counter their lack of primary education, with a program of formal continuing education, which might allow for the propagation to become eventually fruitful. In the intelligent design movement it is believed when you see design in a structure it is evidence of an intelligent designer. In a movement however, if you see no design for internal renewal or fertility, you either see design incompetence, or fraud for wolves gain.

We discussed last week the contrast between, *solo scriptura*, and *sola scriptura* in interpreting the Bible. This week I suppose we could construct the phrase for movement growth, *solo domestica* contrast with the concept of lasting change brought about by *sola domestica*.

Since Thoreau lived in an age before our sophisticated understanding of genetics, for lack of a better term he understood at the transcendental level of truth, that our future as successful societies is determined by the complex diversity of our institutions, just as nature depends upon a complex ecotone, to produce a self sustaining ecosphere.

Movements come and movements go, but the Word of God stands forever, as does His grace to

tend His sheep. In that grace of His revealed word, written in the Bible and spoken into creation, exists the diversity to create an unspeakably rich eternity. Domestication to keep the sheep in line will not succeed, for while the sheep analogy may relate to man's perception, the sheep allegory however, only relates to fallen men and women, which are in the process of being reborn as children of God.

Our last issue: Thesis One: No heavy lifting?;
PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2006pdffiles/thesisone146.pdf>