



Chronicles of Diversity

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Chronicles of Diversity Contact Information:

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Welcome Shade

*This issue is dedicated to the
memory of Gavin Coffee, who died in
a stupendous car crash late last week.
Pray for his family and friends as they
learn to cope with this completely
unexpected occurrence. See post script
at this article's end.*

“Welcome weary traveler,
come and sit in the shade of my
fig tree. It sure has been hot this
summer hasn't it. How about a
nice glass of ice tea? If you would
like lemon in it, I will fetch a
lemon from that tree over there,
and that little bottle on the table
has some simple syrup in it if you
would like a little sweetening. I
also have some fresh squeezed
lemonade in the fridge in the
house if you prefer.

“There you go, enjoy! So what
brings you this way on such a hot
sunny day?

”Oh, there's no charge, all this
is just a gift I have been given,
but there is sort of an unspoken,
unwritten contract, that if I want
to keep this orchard growing and
enlarging the house for travelers,

I have to give it away. Some years
back Kathy Mattea put out a
song by that title. I had been
thinking about how the most
important things in our lives are
really gifts that we really can't
earn, then I heard the song and
it sort of put it into perspective.
I had been working on this
place for many years, but since
I quit directly charging for this
orchard's gifts, it has just sort
of mushroomed. It's one of my
favorite songs on my iPod, why
don't you give it a listen.

“So you have been gifted with
this journey, so where are you
from, and where are you headed?

“Lost it all, I see. I really
don't know where this place is
headed either. But I was blessed
early on in travels down this
lonesome trail by a couple of old
wise mentors. They had made
millions in this life and basically
considered money as sort of a
way to keep score, somewhat in
competition with their friends.
I thought it was odd too, but

their wisdom was; out of all the complexities of this life, money was the easiest to obtain. Their advise was to work diligently on developing your gifts and the money will take care of itself, and in the end, though the journey may be difficult and many times you seem to lose your way, it may be stormy and you want to give up, the money or other resources will appear.

“I suppose it helped in my case, that at the time I was working on a unique gold processing stream. From raw ore to processed gold and silver, that was so simple that it completely amazed me. Oh, it doesn't scale too well in that global bigger is better world order, but it was designed for travelers like you. As you continue to travel along your journey, why not do a little prospecting. There is a passage in the Old Testament, the book of Haggai 2: 6 9, that talks about all the gold and silver belonging to God, especially in times like this. You can contemplate that passage as you travel.

“For thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Once more it is a little while I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘And in this place I will give peace,’ says the LORD of hosts.”
Haggai 2:6 9

“Anyway, over time I became more and more amazed at just how much money I could make, I mean since it came from the earth and from God and not some scheme of man, or from the stock market like Bill Gates. I realized I couldn't spend that much money and not get tangled up in the whole mammon scheme. Along the way though I sort of developed my first concept of giving away your gifts. I really did nothing to develop this concept, it just sort of appeared and I could be rich beyond my wildest dreams.

“Like everyone else my first plan was to give away ten percent and keep the ninety for me. Over time that vow moved to keep ten percent and give the ninety. To be honest, everyone I tell about this giving idea thinks I am really freaky. I guess to make a long story short. I am still

looking for a few people with the wisdom of my first two mentors, that would be more concerned with putting the gold was really doing some good, rather than accumulating it in safe deposit boxes and bank accounts, that they really can't take with them beyond this world. I suppose the saddest thing, is of the ministries and charities that I have contacted, they seem content to continue to raise money the same old way, by bugging people to contribute rather than truly dig a hole in the ground processed only by faith.

”Well if you should come into that natural wealth, or meet someone who is rich enough to be more concerned about the final destination rather than just getting more, send them my way. God willing I will still be here, or I will be back soon.

“Yeah, I got one of them just last week. Actually mine was a little booklet. You know, it's like most of the other stuff in this world. If you are just a little more organized, work a little harder, think positive thoughts, do this and that and you will create a new rich reality for yourself. As you just said, and as Kathy's song says, it worked until you lost it all. And now you are some where down that trail to realize if and when you get there again, you will give away more, accumulate less, and try not to worry about tomorrow so much.

“I'll come back again to that thought and my development concept, but I think I should mention some of the training I received from my mother. Actually, I probably had one of the best upbringings anyone could hope for in this life. It still amazes me, what a great job my parents did, with so little to work with. I suppose when you consider their own limitations it was an absolute miracle.

”Anyway my mother never went to college, but she received a PHD in Worry, while minoring in Stuff Accumulation. I suppose to some extent it is part of my environmental inheritance, to go along with the genes they gave me. Worry and stuff seem so natural to me.

“One of the Bible passages I find troubling, as I am still trying to manage some of the stuff that my mother accumulated before she died, was the New Testament passage from Mark where Jesus tells the rich young ruler to sell what you have and give to the poor. I have thought about just giving away all the stuff I don't need, but selling stuff takes a whole lot more effort.

Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me." Mark 10:21

"This sort of also relates in what I have to sell to the world, that over time brings in enough liquidity to continue to enlarge the orchard and the guest house. What I do is similar to what my doctor does when he replaced my ascending aorta. Here and in the surrounding country is where I do my research and my writing, just like he did at the University of Washington Medical Center. When I'm not here, just like he does, I'm out teaching, somewhere in the rest of the world, what I have learned.

"That aortic surgery was sure another gift experience, if you stick around for a few days I can share the details of that too. The coolest part of that was when they put me into a drug induced coma to help correct my heart arrhythmia, as about a third of the patients develop. All these worldly trappings and fluff were stripped away, and I was gifted with a high peak experience of the true gift of my life. Just so I would not forget, since I am not too good with numbers, it happened March 3rd, 2003, at about 3 AM. I've added thirty three minutes and seconds just for effect, but I was in really no place for telling time in that very low state of existence. But I do remember past midnight and how scared I was, and I woke up about five thirty in the morning much to the amazement of the nurse watching my vital signs in my intensive care room.

"So this is very briefly what I teach here and around the world.

"Creation is the ultimate reality that we experience in this world. As created creatures, created in the image of God, we can either learn from creation or from man. Life is ultimately a balancing act, or better a tensioning process between those two extremes. Western urban culture is by far and away the highest art form, of believing that we can control and conquer nature, that the world has ever known. Therefore, virtually everyone is tensioned and highly biased toward human rationality,

ultimately resting on the premise of materialism; money, stuff, worry, and about how to get and maintain them. In short, we believe in an illusion of security, instead of even having a concept of true security.

"Creation on the other hand is the ultimate completely natural free gift of God's Natural Law and Common Grace. We have the choice, no matter our religious understanding or lack thereof, to learn from it, or ignore it. You haven't told me much of how you happened down this trail, but virtually everyone who has come to sit in the shade of this fig tree and have a glass of lemonade or iced tea, has left behind, maybe by choice or by force, a lot of excess rational baggage, and a pretty sizable library of self help materials.

"You just happened to show up while our guests are out in the field learning that all their life and enterprise stuff, is really just a model, a poor model at that, of the diversity of God's natural creation. Some of those guests are here on a so called scholarship, or partial scholarship, those who can afford it, are paying the big bucks, a few really big bucks. That's simply the gift they all bring.

"Overtime, just through the routine learning experiences, they get to know who has paid their dues with money and those who have paid their dues in some other way. I suppose the most interesting thing about the whole process, is through the community atmosphere we try to develop, they all begin to realize that life itself is the ultimate gift and this life is way too short to keep anything completely to yourself. No matter what your divine gifts may be, most discover that to paraphrase from the "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe," it's much better to live in a land where it is always Christmas and never winter.

"I suppose you were gifted today, because I normally do my writing later in the week, today I am here, because I have some not for money work to do on Wednesday, which is when I am normally at my laptop and visiting with new friends that always just seem to stop off the trail. You are welcome to hang around, if you would like to stay, we need to give you a personal interview so we will know how your gifts can best be utilized to help you out, and also help others, so that you can better enjoy and grow from your continuing pilgrimage. Yes, we are

working on all that marketing stuff, but it always seems to get pushed to the back burner by the gifts of life.

Better than all that, even though I have been doing most of the talking, I can see from the questions you ask and your genuine demeanor, I am the one who is truly blessed today.

“Do you have any other questions?”

“Oh, the fig tree is very unusual in this country. We have to go through all sorts of contortions to keep it alive. We even move it into a green house for the winter. Obviously, it is not a native plant of this area or this climate. But you really are a gifted person, most of our guests don't pick up on that for a long time, some never do. We make it a point to never discuss the allegory unless we are asked directly.

“Everything on this earth as a place and a season, just as in Ecclesiastes Chapter 3 and the song from the hippie times. But actually the fig tree relates to a couple of Old Testament prophets and their descriptions of eternity. In those utterances, every person was blessed with the gift of his very own fig tree and the opportunity to enjoy its shade with friends.

“I suppose that assumes that it gets warm enough in heaven to enjoy the shade with a cool glass of iced tea or lemonade. We have endeavored to bring that model here. So although we are still stuck in this world like a fig tree in a pot, not knowing for sure if tomorrow will bring sun, rain, frost, or drought, we should enjoy the gifts we have today, and let God control the future. That is the ultimate gift that our creation programs teach. Hopefully you will find it, if you decide to stick around for a while.

“Therefore our real goal is to strip away your dependency on the security that the world requires you to carry, and travel with a lighter pack and with a new vision of the ultimate gift of life and your unique place in the world. Those two Old Testament prophecies are found in Micah 4:4 and Zechariah 3:10. We have prepared this little card to help you focus both on the requirements of the present today, viewing somewhat your future fig tree that will be planted in eternal soil and not just a big pot.

But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree,

And no one shall make them afraid;

For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.
Micah 4:4

In that day,' says the LORD of hosts,

“Everyone will invite his neighbor

Under his vine and under his fig tree.’” Zechariah 3:10

Gavin Coffee post script: *This may sound harsh, but Gavin did not pass away in a tragic car accident. Such accounts should be stricken from all our thoughts and our remorse. Through out all of human history, regardless of religious affiliation, people have a God created belief in an after life, it is only in this western atheistic world view that people pass away. Furthermore, tragic car accidents do not happen in the Christian or Jewish world view. While the mode of his death was unexpected to us, death is just an opportunity to enter into eternity. He died instantly and was transported to an eternal kingdom, in which he has begun to prepare an eternal orchard and home for his family and friends. All this has taken place by the grace of God alone, offered through Jesus Christ alone. I one day hope to stop by for a glass of iced tea, or maybe lemonade, and maybe a tree ripened fig. Hopefully Gavin will say you have stopped by too.*

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