

# Chronicles of Diversity

*Your leadership weekly*



*St. Paul's Mission, NE Washington*

## Dusty tracks

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The road to and from Keane Wonder Springs is a dusty track across the Death Valley desert. Not having been there, except by aerial photo and topographic map, I have a sense on what the way might be, but only a sense. To actually understand the journey however, requires a California desert experience. Now most of my California trips have been desert experiences, that is why I always love my rare journeys to the City of Angels. But that is a track we will only travel by illustration this week.

The procedures used for putting out this weekly message have occurred in a lonely desert these last couple of months. First, the mailing service that I had been using just disappeared for a couple of days, at the same time I had trouble with my hard disk, in the process loosing all my address book, except those on the Chronicles mail server which I could not access.

When I found the service that I had been using for the last few weeks, I found it easier to work with, except for some reason it bounced a large number of emails, to valid email addresses. For instance, as best as I can discern from their statistics, they bounced every AOL message last week.

It seems strange that the behemoths of the information superhighway, are intent upon killing any communications that their robots think you might consider unwanted, and at the same time promote those hidden pop-up ads for all kinds of junk and services, and do nothing to clean up pornographic sites, other than try to sell you some software to purge your hard drive of all those nasty links.

In case you missed it, last week's message deals with wonder springing from desert experiences. If you would like a copy I would be happy to forward you another. These experiences come either by nature, or the dusty tracks of your individual life.

So wonderfully, this dusty trail all ties together with what I want to say this week. And this week we have another way of trying to improve upon the delivery of this message. This time I have a shareware software program, that I will give a shot. One of the problems with those other services, was that they had the ability to produce a nice looking can, but you really could not do much with the text inside, without adding HTML code (the old fashioned way) at the end of the text blocks. With this program we should be able to make the words easier to distinguish, more healthful, it is just that the table dressing might not be as cool.

When you think of roads, in western literature you must consider Robert Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken" which follows:

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

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

The Bible has a similar passage in Matthew 7:13,14:

Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

The surrounding context in Matthew seven, gives a spiritual application that is missing in Frost's poem. But as we continue down this narrow dusty track of developing a real community within the church and within society, we must look at a deeper contrast than just what is relatively easy to discern. This is even beyond the experiences of Christian, in John Bunyan's, "Pilgrim's Progress" based upon these precepts in Matthew.

Now wonder springs from these, my actual experiences this past week.

I have always liked the music of John Denver. "Country roads take me home, to the place I belong." Those of you who have ever searched for his CD's in the record store know that most of the time you have to ask for directions. Now for a guy that is not an easy thing to do. But this week I was looking at music DVD's to see what was available. And there right in front of me was the DVD for one of his last concerts, "The Wildlife Concert," before he flew off into the California sunset to be with his concept of God.

My thoughts on the tragedy of his life, reflect on his personal struggles, but also how the Christian community, who claims to be the only way to eternal truth, did not, or more appropriately, could not, or would not, provide a witness, to one of the most spiritually gifted musicians of our era.

Shallow Christianity produces shallow people. That is why I find the words of "Wild Montana Skies" speaking much more about real life, than all the industry of Contemporary Christian Music.

I bought the DVD and watched it immediately. In one of the divisions between different segments of the concert, he spoke about how he and his music really didn't fit the paths of the music industry.

John said he grew up on country and western music. But now the western is gone, and it is just country. He said he was a western artist. He believed that his music reflects, the unique grandeur of the American West. He contrasted "Take Me Home Country Roads," which he considered country, with "Wild Montana Skies," which he considered western. I think in the same way, in that same era, Gordon Lightfoot's music reflects that same eternity of the Canadian prairies.

Country music makes its home in Nashville. Western music is much more nomadic. Forsake of our discussion today, country music can relate to Frost's poem, western music speaks to biblical eternal constants.

Forwards, or backwards, country music is all about me, it is centered in me and my experiences. Western music speaks of wider eternal truths and a place where man is placed in a diverse natural community from whence he finds his role and his subsistence. In country music, wealth however it is defined, is temporal, in western music, wealth is held only in stewardship, subject to the will and ways of God.

Now I have added somewhat to the context of John's words, for it relates to another discussion later in the week. At that time, I was rebuked for being a believer in, "Western, Judeo-Christian values." What I saw in that rebuke was that while the "western" was the same word, this "western" related more to country music and Frost's poem, than it does to "western" music and the Bible.

Judeo-Christian values should reflect the roots of an arid pilgrimage across the deserts of this fallen world, not the utopia of man's achievements. But this arid outlook is not what western Christianity is about. It has been corrupted, not by just man's sinfulness, but perhaps more so by natural abundance. If I can plant corn and potatoes in the spring and come back at harvest and collect the bounty of God's provision of natural rain, I have a different world view, than if I must daily carry buckets of water from Wonder Springs to irrigate my crops and to provide a meager subsistence to me and my family.

The real world is not Western Europe and the Eastern United States, where the weather is mild, rainfall abundant, and the soils rich. In the real world they don't sing country music, or at least think it is of any eternal

value. In the real world you can't be a western Christian, because not only will it not work in the eternal sense, but it can't reproduce in arid climates.

This points to my final discussion Sunday evening. The true deserts of this world lie in the hearts and minds of men. The eternity within the soul of man cannot be satisfied with the temporal trinkets of western culture. Hence, western man lives in the desert of his own creation, afraid to ask, or better, to even think about his vast eternal desert without the love of God. For that is actually the reality of the desert of hell. In that eternal desert, ones thirst shall not be quenched, nor his worm die.

John Denver spoke during that segment of the "unique grandeur of the American west." That is truly the message of all of his western music. His God was different than the God of western evangelical Christianity. The point of this whole series on community building is "The God of the Bible is different than the God promoted by most of western evangelical Christianity."

Not only is the love of God beyond our understanding, but also His grace. Wonder Springs not from how much we know, but from how little we do know, about life, about freedom, about love. A "Rocky Mountain High" is not the solution, and neither are the "Poems, Prayers, and Promises," shared as you "pass the pipe around." But there is a glimpse of the eternal grandeur of a world beyond this age, as a community gathers in that same song to wonder, and "to watch the sun go down."

From the ascension of Jesus Christ to be seated at the right hand of His Father, the sun began to set on this present age. Just because we do not understand God's concept of time, and have concocted a mirage of schemes to help us justify our own faulty desert oasis, does not change that eternal truth of an external sunset.

The Bible in context teaches a community pilgrimage from the worldly high culture of Egypt, across a life long desert struggle to a promise land. Few of natural Israel successfully made the journey, of the adults who began, only Joshua and Caleb. During the journey the law was given on the Mountain of God. Outside the City of Peace, the law was fulfilled, so that many more can reach by grace that promised Jerusalem. But in the world, the reality still remains that so few are obedient enough to have the gift to travel that dusty track not only with Jesus, but also in the company of a large family of brothers and sisters.

This community is something that Christian, in "Pilgrim's Progress" should have experienced long before he reached the gates of that eternal city. Even in John Bunyan's day, western culture was too evolved to understand the true mandate and promise of historic Judeo-Christian community values .

This community is the challenge of leadership, the challenge of the church. Now, until the sun finally sets, pray that the wind not wipe out our dusty tracks.

## From Wonder Springs

Artisan creations & adventures.

That is the phrase that currently describes my understanding of the development of wondersprings.com.

**Creations:** Things that are produced in local communities as individuals attempt through choice, or necessity, to make a living without complete dependence upon western cultural worldliness. The luxury of the internet makes that a possibility.

**Adventures:** Business, community, and creation education changes the opulent self satisfied individuals into eternal personalities, functioning in service to their diverse habitat.

We are in the process of changing our name with the State of Washington from PREFER to Wonder Springs.

Your prayers and ideas on the dusty narrow path forward are sought.

## Seeds for Prayer

Praise for the provision that all the stuff that is needed to upgrade this ministry opportunity, at least for the present, is now on site. It will take some time to fully implement these gifts, but pray that they will be used for God's glory.

'Twas in the early hours of Tuesday morning that frustration with the problems associated with mailing this weekly message finally led me to the software we will be using to mail this message, hence as far as I know. After several hours of frustration, at the appropriate time, the idea of how to find something that could work just popped into my mind. It was so simple, and in a few minutes, I decided that at least for today, that this is the path.

Among a series of other things, I would like to see this distribution increase, get the web presence upgraded, as well as a number of personal provisions from the Lord, at least one I would consider a miracle. Please intercede for these provisions.