**Diversity**

**The wolf and the lamb shall feed together
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox,
and dust shall be the serpents’ food.
They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain,
says the Lord.
*(Isaiah 65:25)***

**Now there are diversities of gifts, but there is only one Spirit.**

**And there are diversities of ministries, but there is only one Lord.**

**And there are diversities of powers,**

**but it is the one God who works all things in all men.**

 ***(1 Corinthians 12:4-6)***

**After this I looked,**

**and there was a great multitude that no one could count,**

**from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages.**

***(Revelation 7:9)***

**Americans are best defined by diversity: The August 7 letter, “Christian Founders gave us our country,” is based upon a false assertion: America was not founded as a Christian nation. Nowhere in the Constitution is the word “Christian” used. If anything, the Founders bent over backward trying to make sure that the people could worship however they chose: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . . (First Amendment). It seems clear to me that the Continental Congress did not wish to favor any one religion over others or, equally bad, have the government interfering with a person’s right to worship as they choose. Our Founding Fathers – Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Hamilton, etc. – were not evangelical Christians. Jefferson, for example, was a deist, believing in a God of nature, but not a God who was personally involved in men’s lives. They were careful not to put us all under one tent. Diversity best defines us. Let’s not forget it. *(Mel Singer, in Rocky Mountain News, August 19, 2004)***

**Like strings of yarn, strings of amino acids (which form proteins) can fold into many shapes. Specific shapes can determine the protein’s task in a cell. They can also bend into abnormal shapes, called misfolds. For example, clumps of proteins called amyloid fibrils are thought to be the cause of Alzheimer’s disease as well as several other devastating illnesses. Treatment ideas for Alzheimer’s have thus focused on preventing the midfolds. But researchers in Italy and the United Kingdom reported in April that many different types of normal proteins – with no known link to diseases – can also fold into shapes indistinguishable from the dreaded amyloid fibrils. (Rabiya S. Tuma, in Discover magazine, January, 2003)**

**Bad news for bananas: Americans’ favorite breakfast fruit is chronically inbred and therefore at heightened risk of extinction, Discovery News reports. A new study by Australian National University researchers shows that for the past 7,000 years, almost all of the world’s popular banana species have failed to crossbreed in the wild. For millennia, humans have instead artificially bred hybrids of natural varieties, but those hybrids – including the common Cavendish found in supermarkets – are themselves infertile. To increase production, farmers have to clone their banana trees, making each plant and its fruit genetically identical, and thus vulnerable, since a single opportunistic pest or pathogen could wipe out world production. It’s about more than breakfast: A major die-off would “have immediate consequences,” says study author Mark Donohue, “possibly leading to famines.” About 85 percent of bananas grown around the world are staples of the local diets where they’re harvested. Donohue says researchers should urgently search for a fertile, genetically diverse banana species to refresh the gene pool of our current, disease-prone crop before disaster strikes. Such a resilient banana probably exists on a remote farm or in the wild, he says, “if we could only find it.” *(The Week magazine, July 22, 2011)***

**My parents sent me to an interfaith camp where I was beaten up by boys of all races and religions. *(Woody Allen)***

**There's room in this world for beauty to be diverse. *(Lupita Nyong'o, actress)***

**Biological diversity is a measure of the differences between the types and numbers of living things in a natural area. For example, if an area has more types of plant species than another area, it is more biologically diverse in plant life. Areas that have kept their natural level of biological diversity are usually considered healthier and are better able to withstand threats now and into the future. Therefore, biological diversity is a measure of forest sustainability. *(Natural Inquirer – The World’s Forests Edition)***

**One of the major turning points in the history of the Christian Church occurred in AD 313, when Emperor Constantine announced that Christians were allowed to practice their religion in the Roman Empire. Because of this edict, Christians could now compete with pagan Romans for high government positions. However, Constantine did not make Christianity the state religion or outlaw paganism; those were the actions of the later emperor, Theodosius I. Although Constantine’s mother exposed him to Christianity, he did not finally declare himself a Christian until he was over forty. (Noel Botham, in The Amazing Book of Useless Information, p. 16)**

**The new Congress is 80 percent white, 80 percent male, and 92 percent Christian. That makes it one of the most diverse in history. Although 20 percent of the public has no religious affiliation, only 0.2 percent of Congress claims to be in that category. (WashingtonPost.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, January 16, 2015)**

**For centuries farmers have grown crops in monocultures -- fields planted in only potatoes, wheat or other single crops. This is not the most efficient way to farm. In nature, different plants associate with one another in ways that seem to enhance chemical defenses, to allow them to camouflage themselves against herbivores and to share nutrients. (Lowell Ponte, in Reader's Digest)**

**The young man was sitting next to a young lady at a bar. “I have to tell you that I still live at home even though I’m of legal age. My grandparents live there too. They’re from Canada, although originally they came from Thailand. My parents moved here from Amsterdam, although both of them were born in Australia. I was born and raised in Dutch West Indies, before moving here with my family.” “How interesting it must be,” the young lady replied, “to live in such a culturally diverse environment!” “Maybe,” replied the man, “but I can’t get over the fact that I am living with a bunch of immigrants.” (The PassTime Paper)

Difference is a blessing, not a challenge. We define ourselves by knowing other people. We know our world by learning about difference. What is the word we often use? Tolerance. Is that a positive notion? Not really. “For the time being, I will tolerate you”? I’m against that concept. It means difference is a threat. Difference is a blessing and you don’t tolerate a blessing. You embrace it. (Islamic scholar Mohammad Mahallati of Oberlin College, in BoingBoing.net)**

**The famous song of the South – “Dixie” – was written not by a southerner, but by a northerner. “Dixie” was written by Daniel Emmett, who was born in Ohio. Emmett wrote the song while he lived in New York City. Emmett wrote “Dixie” in 1859, and although it was northern in origin, it was adopted by the South. *(Charles Reichblum, in Knowledge in a Nutshell, p. 86)***

**A THOUGHT TO REMEMBER: You don’t get harmony when everybody sings the same note. *(Reminisce magazine)***

**Good week for: Diversity, after a new Indiana University study estimated that Earth is home to 1 trillion species of organisms, of which 99.99 percent have yet to be discovered. Most are microbes. *(The Week magazine, May 13, 2016)***

**How many American families are divided along liberal-conservative lines? A lot, I’ll bet. Our former First Lady Laura Bush was a registered democrat before marrying George W. Since he left office, she’s gone on record supporting gay rights and abortion. There’s also Maria Shriver, who recently split from Arnold – not solely over politics, one would assume, but that couldn’t have helped. And, of course, famously political pundits Mary Matalin and James Carville. *(Steven Slon, in The Saturday Evening Post)***

**Never hire or promote in your own image. It is foolish to replicate your strength and idiotic to replicate your weakness. It is essential to employ, trust and reward those whose perspective, ability and judgment are radically different from yours. It is also rare, for it requires uncommon humility, tolerance and wisdom. (Dee W. Hock)**

**North America has the greatest diversity of freshwater mussels in the world – 297 species. (*Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Wise Up!, p. 251)***

**The American Planning Association recently singled out Garden of the Gods for its 300 million years of geologic history, its impressive array of dramatic rock formations, and its use as a habitat by species as diverse as dinosaurs and honey ants. Now a city-owned park, Garden of the Gods offers exceptional natural beauty, wildlife, hiking and biking trails, rock climbing and horseback riding. *(2012 Official Visitors Guide: Colorado Springs and the Pikes Peak Region, Colorado)***

**The 2,023 students Harvard University accepted for the class of 2018 are the most diverse in the school’s history. African-American students make up 11.9 percent of the admitted students; Hispanics, 13 percent; and Asians, 19.7 percent. *(The Harvard Crimson, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 2, 2014)***

**Americans love to say that in their country, anyone can grow up to be president. But for more than two centuries, that hasn’t been true, said Chidanand Rajghatta in the Delhi Times of India. Only this year does a woman, Hillary Clinton, or a black man, Barack Obama, have a real chance at the office. The past 43 presidents have been white men, all of them Christian, all but one of them married. In India, by contrast, we have been led by “a staggering variety of chief executives,” even though we have had only 14 prime ministers in our 60 years of independence. We elected our first woman, Indira Gandhi, back in 1966. We elected our first non-Hindu, the Sikh Manmohan Singh, in 2004. We have even elected “a widow, a widower, and a bachelor.” In the near future, “this dharma of diversity is set to expand.” A top contender for the job in the coming years is Mayawati Kumari, who is of the Dalit caste, formerly known as Untouchables. Her toughest rival is probably Priyanka Gandhi, who isn’t even a full-blooded Indian: Her mother is Italian. “Truly, it is in India that anyone can go on to be the prime minister.” *(The Week magazine, February 29, 2008)***

**Of the 35 judicial nominees President Obama has named since January, 17 are women, 15 are ethnic minorities, and five are openly gay. Six are straight white men. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 15, 2013)***

**If we cannot now end our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity. (John F. Kennedy)**

**Good leadership requires you to surround yourself with people of diverse perspectives who can disagree with you without fear of retaliation. *(Doris Kearns Goodwin)***

**A bank in New York City is now making it possible to buy and sell stock using their ATM machines. This is great -- it gives muggers a chance to diversify their portfolios. *(Late Show with David Letterman, CBS)***

**The loss of diversity in any system increases the vulnerability of that system. Single-species forests fall easy prey to beetles or fungi; single-hybrid crops are overly sensitive to changes in temperature or moisture. Similarly, tribal peoples play an important role in the human ecosystem. They're not just here to show “civilized” city / state dwellers which jungle plants may cure cancer. They maintain the cultural and genetic diversity of the human species. Different tribes will look, behave and talk differently. They will practice different religions, eat different foods, create different types of places to live and sleep and wear different clothing. This is a good thing. You don't have to like them, or even, be friendly toward them. But you respect their uniqueness, their traditions and their right to their way of life. And you don't convert them to yours. (Thom Hartmann, in The Last Hours of Ancient Sunlight)**

**At bottom every man knows well enough that he is a unique being, only once on this earth; and by no extraordinary chance will such a marvelously picturesque piece of diversity in unity as he is, ever be put together a second time. (Fredrich Nietzsche)**

**Oldsmobile sponsored the 1969 Miss America pageant. Judith Anne Ford, Belvidere, Illinois, won. Her dad worked for Chrysler. (L. M. Boyd)**

**If we choose only to expose ourselves to opinions and viewpoints that are in line with our own, studies suggest that we become more polarized, more set in our ways. But if we choose to actively seek out information that challenges our assumptions and our beliefs, perhaps we can begin to understand where the people who disagree with us are coming from. If you’re somebody who only reads the editorial page of The New York Times, try glancing at the page of The Wall Street Journal once in a while. If you’re a fan of Glenn Beck or Rush Limbaugh, try reading a few columns on the Huffington Post website. It may make your blood boil; your mind may not be changed. But the practice of listening to opposing views is essential for effective citizenship. (President Barack Obama, in a speech at the University of Michigan)**

**Paintings are more interesting with complimentary colors. Harmony in music comes from creating agreement between divergent notes. Couples could not dance without taking opposing steps. (Daily Word magazine, August 30, 2011)**

**How plants grow and use nutrients may be just as important to an ecosystem as how many different plants there are, researchers said. Three reports in the journal Science challenge the prevailing wisdom that biodiversity – having many different species living all together – is the prime factor in a healthy environment. (Rocky Mountain News, 1997)**

**We do not have to choose our favorite among the seasons. It is only necessary to rejoice in the beauty of their differences. *(Evelyn H. Lauder)***

**If your spirits are low, do something; if you have been doing something, do something different. *(E. E. Hall)***

**In the five years leading up to September, 2020, the number of people with**

**the title "head of diversity" rose 107 percent, "director of diversity" 75 percent, and "chief diversity officer" 68 percent, according to Linkedin. *(Insider.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, June 4, 2021)***

**Diversity training is futile: Diversity training is a bust, said Drake Bennett. The “vast majority of Fortune 500 companies now offer training to their employees to eradicate prejudices against racial minorities, gays, and women – at a cost of billions. Sadly, recent studies have found that diversity training doesn’t change attitudes or behavior, and that the programs can “actually decrease the number of women and minorities in management.” How could that be? Social scientists have consistently found that prejudice against “Others” is both deeply rooted and reflexive, and can’t be easily erased. Some researchers have even discovered that mandatory diversity training – often instituted as a result of discrimination lawsuits – backfires, creating resentment against the very groups it is supposed to benefit. There’s nothing wrong with trying to increase the diversity of the workforce, and to open management positions to women and minorities. But companies won’t achieve these goals by locking employees in a room for hours of tedious lectures designed to “train away our deeply ingrained, and often unconscious, biases.” (The Week magazine, March 19, 2010)**

**Journey to a strange, undersea world: It’s an alien world, teeming with bizarre creatures unlike any previously seen. To find it, scientists didn’t travel to another planet; they sent a first-ever expedition of submersibles to hydrothermal vents at the bottom of the Southern Ocean, near Antarctica. There they found “a hot, dark, lost world” populated by dozens of strange new species that are “almost like a sight from another planet,” Oxford University zoologist Alex Rogers tells Wired.co.uk. The vents – which spew chemicals from deep underground at temperatures of up to 720 degrees – are home to hairy-chested yeti crabs, pale octopuses, and seven- armed starfish among other wonders. Researchers have explored hypothermal vents in the Pacific and Atlantic oceans before, but the Southern Ocean vents appear to support a completely different ecosystem, proving that such habitats are more diverse than previously thought. At hydrothermal vents, where there’s no sunlight to fuel photosynthesis, creatures get their energy from the hot water and stew of chemicals that flow through the fissures in the seabed. Scientists say studying these regions is yielding new insight into how life might arise in the harsh environments of other planets. (The Week magazine, January 20, 2012)**

**My children had a pet goldfish that was a favorite of many of the kids in the diverse Washington, D.C., neighborhood where we lived. Of the children playing in our house the day the goldfish died, two were Hindu, one an Orthodox Jew, one a Catholic and three were Protestants. We decided to have a burial ceremony for the fish. As we walked together down the woodland path in our back yard, with flowers and a carefully prepared coffin, I wasn’t sure what to say over the grave that wouldn’t conflict with the children’s varying religious beliefs. One girl sensed my uncertainty. “I know,” she said. “Let’s sing ‘My Country ‘Tis of Thee.’” We did, and I smiled to think that it took the funeral of a goldfish to teach me what the great melting pot of America is all about. (Martha W. Helgerson, in Reader’s Digest)**

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