

The following revelation came in the midst of the worst communications break down in our marriage that we ever experienced before or since. It is at the core of a continuing unfolding of revelation to this very day. I call it

THE TURTLE STORY

The turtle story revelation probably had the biggest impact on the relationship between Carleen and I of any revelation that I have ever had. The following telling of the story is in the context of a discussion I was having with house church leaders concerning the place of women in the church.

“Again, being ‘head’ does not mean muzzling the women in Christian gatherings. I think I need to share a revelation I received back in 1979. It came as a vision. (I don't have many.) But this one was a lulu.

It was either 1979 or 1980, as best I can recall. A man who was like a father to me in The Lord, (Like Paul, I had at least one mother also, Romans 16:13.) asked me to go with him to a conference in Dallas, Texas. I was at a desperate place in my walk with The Lord, and I said yes. I had no idea what the conference was to be about, or who would be there. I said yes, because he was older, and I thought he needed someone to accompany him. It was “John 17:21,” the first meeting in North America. The conference was called to try to mend the rift in the charismatic renewal, which had resulted from “The Shepherding Movement.”

My older brother in The Lord, Nate Krupp was also there. It seemed like everybody I had ever heard of was there. The Lord met me there in a very powerful way, most of which is a subject for another time. I had a very keen sense of the need to bring back everything I had seen and experienced to my wife, Carleen.

Meanwhile back at the ranch, she had been left with all of the cares of this world, the house, the children, the bill collectors, and even, what was left of the “church that met at our house.” On my arrival home, our expectations met in collision. She needed to unload all that she was carrying of the cares of this life, and I was trying to down load the revelation I had received concerning the life to come. I was so far in the clouds that I was clueless as to the state of her desperation. The more I tried to share, the more frustrated she became.

We found ourselves in the worst communications break down of our 10 year old marriage. She was flipping back and forth between, “That insensitive jerk, why doesn't he see the needs that I see?... If he doesn't see it, then I'm not going to tell him!!” and on the other hand, “Why isn't he upset by all that is wrong around here, how come he is handling the stress so well?... There must be something wrong with me or my faith!!!”

As for my part, I went back to God, thinking out loud, “And for this cause a man shall leave his father and mother...????... What cause could possibly be worth all this aggravation?” Then it hit me.... “What cause?” I couldn't think of the cause! Somehow, I had missed that part. I immediately began a desperate search of the Scriptures, looking for the cause.... *“For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”*

I don't know about you, but, if the cause is there, I couldn't find it. There was still hope, because Paul was quoting Genesis 2:24: *“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”*

I went there, and I still didn't find the cause. But there was that *“therefore”* word, and so I backed up to see what it was there for.

“And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.... And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, ‘This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.’ Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”

As I wrestled with The Lord about this, It came to me that, in the beginning

there was a two legged creature naming animals who was male and female in the image of God.

This is the way I figured it. There was nothing that was done in the first six days, except by God. On the seventh day God rested, and if there was one thing I had learned, even by then, it is that, when God rests, we better rest. So I don't see Adam doing anything on the seventh day either. So, let's say, along comes Monday, and Adam is “up and at em” with God, and God has him naming animals. Please note there is no visible woman yet. She's still in the man. She is only called “*woman*” when, and because, she is taken out of the man. I don't know about you, but I think Bill Cosby has the right spin on all this. According to Cosby “Woman” is short for Woooooo... Man!”

It looks to me like on the seventh day everything was “*very good.*” at least, that was God's opinion. But, once the man was through naming animals, something was, “not good,” again, God's opinion. (It was only in more recent years I came into some understanding of from Who's perspective it was “*not good.*”)

So God puts him to sleep, and you know what happened, or do you? The KJV says God, “*took one of his ribs.*” No big deal,.. right? Except that it goes on to say, “*...and closed up the flesh instead thereof;..*” It's hard to imagine that was good English even in King James' day. In the more modern translations it looks more like some kind of skin graft than a matter of stitches.

And there is another clue,... what Adam said, “*This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh..*” So, it was not just a rib that was taken, there was also flesh that was taken. Up to then I had been a, “rib man.” You know, no big deal, I'm only missing a rib. Well that perception does not make for, “living with your wife according to understanding.” And you know what happens when you don't do that your prayer life is in trouble. “*Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered,*” but more about that shortly. I hope you are with me so far.

So, a missing “*rib*” didn't seem to be enough of a cause to justify all this aggravation. Not even a missing rib plus some flesh seemed to be enough of a cause. Then it hit me... my woman was missing. She was in him the first

time that man ever entered God's rest, and that was very good, a perfect union. Then, apparently for the sake of the work, (and the Creator's hope – Romans 8:20) she had to be removed. It looked to me like resting was one thing, but working was something else again, after all, who needs a “*help meet*” when all you have to do is rest?

I was already pretty Christocentric in my thinking and understanding of the scripture, so, revelation by revelation, thought by thought, I was checking all of this against the “*great mystery, Christ and the Church.*” The Christology seemed to be working so far. Jesus even said, “...*For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh,*” Matthew 19:4-6. If I understand Him correctly, God had made them one flesh male and female, and in a way that, divorce was not an option. The woman had not been removed yet. But, I was still unclear about what I was missing, so The Lord helped me out with one of my only visions. (Fortunately I was already a charismatic, so visions were legal – plus I had some good saved Catholic friends.)

I looked and saw a turtle. It was walking along scratching and snapping, when suddenly a big hand came from above, picked up the turtle, and opened it like a cherrystone clam. Having removed the insides, the top and bottom were put back together, the turtle put back on the ground where it continued to walk, scratch, and snap. Apparently it had been left with enough equipment to keep on scratching and snapping.

Of the inside, the hand made a woman. That was the vision.

The Lord then opened my understanding. He was showing me what I was left with, and what I was missing. What I saw was that, I was left with the strong, protective, relatively insensitive part. After all, a sensitive shell would be a contradiction in function. I had enough left to successfully interact with the cold cruel world. What was missing was most of my telecommunications equipment. She got that part. I guess you've noticed how, everything else being equal, women seem to be able to keep track of a lot more things at once than men can. Actually I think I learned since the vision that a lot of left-right brain connections are broken in males before birth. There is actually some physiology to back up the mass media portrayal of men.

There was more than that which I came to understand, but, armed with that much, I went to Carleen, and told her what I had seen and come to understand. I explained The Lord had showed me that my woman was missing, and that she had most of the telecommunications equipment that I needed to properly function. I told her that The Lord had showed me that he had left me with the protective, and less sensitive part. I said that I would try to become more sensitive, but that there was a very good chance that I would never be as sensitive as she was. That the nature of my function was to be more focused for the sake of being task oriented. I said that the only way I could see it working was for her to be willing to continue to bring to my attention the things that she was concerned with, so I would know where I needed to apply my strength. Up to then, when she would bring me her concern, I would find them very threatening, and condemning, after all, the wife of a good husband shouldn't have any concerns. The expression of her needs and concerns came at me as criticism, an indication of my failure as a provider & protector. Often, when what I read as her "honey do" list became impossibly long, I would just dump the whole thing back on her head. I apologized for all the times I had been reactive rather than redemptive, and promised to try to be better about that. I said that, "If she would reopen to me, I would try be better about receiving what she had to say. The whole conversation was very healing for both of us. In the process I discovered that, *"giving honor to the wife as unto the weaker part,"* could easily be understood as, *"unto the more sensitive part."*

I soon found out, that I didn't have to try to fix everything that was wrong. All she really needed was a place to put her garbage without getting it dumped back on her head. Next day, she would be clean as a whistle, even though I hadn't made everything better. (My hands might be hanging down and my knees weak, but she was fine.) It was enough for her just to have a place to put her concerns. Going back to my Christology, I saw a whole new meaning for Philippians 4:6, 7: *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

Just as Jesus is my garbage man, I'm supposed to be her garbage man. The vineyard can get pretty messed up when wives have no place to put their garbage. That vision probably made the biggest difference in our marriage of any revelation or insight I have received in The Lord. So you see, being head

doesn't mean shutting my wife down, it means giving her a safe place to open up. I have found this not only to be true in our marriage, but true in the Church as well.

I should also say, that this garbage disposal business is not the exclusive privilege of men. Carleen has had to take away plenty of my garbage over the years. Also, we husbands may be called to be the primary earthly source for our wives but we make a very poor substitute for Christ as the primary source of our wife. None of us are strong enough for that. Each of us, husbands and wives have to find our source in Him.

Some years ago now, I was having lunch at the home of a pastor friend of mine. And I shared an observation I had come to after many years, of providing hospitality in our home to many couples in "full time ministry." I said, "Pastor's wives were the loneliest people I know, because they have no one to talk to about their biggest problems." (In general, I think husbands tend to be wife's biggest problems.) He responded by saying, "That can't be true," and asked his wife, "Who do you talk to?" She answered, "No one."

I'm not suggesting that wives hang their husbands out to dry in the Church, but I am saying there is a problem, and most "ministers" I've met are in denial about it. Whatever the God given differences between men and women, shutting women down in either "church" or home is not the proper response."

Jay Ferris - Circa 1980