

When I plant my garden, the cron is all in a row. Broccoli stands next to broccoli, onions swell only in the space I have chosen for onions. On one side of my pear tree ~~stax~~ soon will blossom the ~~x~~ daisys, along the shed the fox gloves, in front of them the bachelor buttons, That is how my garden is planted.

But when God plants his fields and meadows, dandelions and corn flowers queen annes lace and small sunflowers, grasses of every size and shape all grow together.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the Colorado rockies , above timberline where the land has never known plow nor mower. Yellows and pinks and blues and purples, all growing together, none of the order that I demand of my plantings, yet a beauty beyond anything that I could produce.

When we plant our churches, they look a lot like my graden. We gather with people like us, similar in education, in income, in race, in values. We are most comfortable that way. I offer classes to make sure that there will be likeness among us, to make sure that the corn does not get mixed up with the broccoli, the peas with the petunias.

But when God plants his church it goes like this:

A rush of a mighty wind, tongues aglow that the spirit might speak, then words, an outpouring of words. And they all heard them speak in their native languages. Not one language for one people, everyone lined up, the same, but as many languages as their were peoples, so that each heard what the spirit had to say. On that day of Pentecost the Lord was meeting his people where they were. Not uprooting them, trnasplanting them, not first asking them to learn his language, but speaking in theirs. All sorts of peoples, planted in all sorts of places would be his church.

Luke tells us that those who were there that day hearing in their own language were bewildered. He tells us that all were amazed and perplexed saying

"What does this mean?" And others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."

For all of us who are straight row planters, beans here and corn over there kinds of persons, ~~being~~ ~~the~~ ~~kind~~ ~~of~~ ~~person~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~perplexed~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~perplexed~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~perplexed~~ there is still a lot of bewilderment and perplexity over the way God meets people where they are and names them his own. This one is a slave of alcohol, that one never has a good word to speak about anyone. Over there is a complainer, she is selfish, he is unreliable. The Lord says, Out of this bunch of people, I am going to make my blossoming meadow.

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Now I who want my garden all in order think God should begin with some sort of entrance exam. Let's determine first whether these people meet a minimum standard of goodness. Let's set a standard for good deeds, for usefulness in the community of faith, a standard for financial contributions, a standard for being able to get along with people. But God sends his spirit into all sorts of people.

Some were abused as children, now passing on what they learned at their parents hands. Some were bent and twisted by the hard blow of the death of a parent when they were young, scarred by growing up in a home where no one was free to love. Some were crushed by poverty, some have never known friends. There are as many stories as there are people gathered in the church of Jesus Christ, gathered by his spirit.

And some mocked saying, They are filled with new wine.

Even the mockers were prophets on that day when God poured out his spirit on all flesh.

For Jesus had told a parable about himself: No one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the wine will burst the skins and the wine is lost, and so are the skins.

Jesus, his spirit were the new wine, the Jewish faith ~~were~~ in which God blessed the keepers of the law, the good, this was the old wineskin. On this

