

Kory Darty, AE-0717  
WordsUncaged Submission  
(Essay/Short Story)

### The Garden Gospel of Kory Darty

I, Kory Latrell Darty, began as a divine thought in the mind of three persons. In one unity they said, “Let us make Man in our own image, according to our likeness.” I was a seed in the eternal mind of God and predestined to spread the gospel and glorify the exalted name of Christ Jesus.

I know that God planted the Garden, but did the lush vegetation grow and blossom from seeds planted in the soil? Or was it planted in a state of full maturity with foliage rich in heavenly greens and fruit ripe with the sweetness of paradise? After all, the Tree of Life was already there and everything—absolutely everything—was good and beautiful.

I was planted in a small part of a large garden in Laurel, Mississippi. I was given instructions and entrusted with the cultivation of the land I had been given. Alongside me was the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and part of my stewardship as the gardener was to cultivate my gift of teaching, administering, discerning of spirits, and imparting words of wisdom and knowledge. But like the tares that were sown among the fields of wheat, I didn’t guard my heart and I let ego, pride, materialism, low self-esteem, and dysfunctional relationships choke the gospel out of my morals.

I lost reverence for the godhead. Sin, death, and decay caused my soul to wither like a dying flower. Fear made me hide from my maker and guilt stripped me naked before his presence. I tried to cover my sin with the remains of tattered excuses, but God’s fiery gaze peered right through them, even down to the bones.

My heart longed to repent but I wouldn’t listen. I was completely out of fellowship with God and that fact made it easy for me to walk in darkness with no direction, wisdom, conviction or correction.

I stumbled, like a drunkard, through life and was blinded by my own captivity for 28 long years. I was ruining the garden that I had been charged with nurturing and I am quite certain that God and his angels watched in utter dismay as I ran rampant through His garden, speaking gibberish and sowing tares of destruction by uprooting plants and cutting down trees like a disillusioned madman. But this is the ruinous effect of out-of-control sin. Each positive seed that God planted fell by the wayside and was greedily devoured by my own selfishness. Other seeds of wisdom and counseling fell on stony places because my heart had turned hard. I was my own enemy, whacking myself over the head with one ungodly choice after another.

I had heard the Word. I had even believed that it had taken solid root, but when tribulation and persecution came, I immediately fell because I had no solid root in me. I was a seed never watered and as such, I could not flourish. I just needed love, valuable time, assistance, and an avenue that God could use to embrace his provision for me to blossom and mature.

The faith I had was the size of a mustard seed and withstood the seasons through the storms of metamorphosis. The weather of calamities created an atmosphere of change, and like a plant, I got the blessings that fostered my growth. Divine appointments came through healthy relationships. Christian sister, Diane, helped with the pruning process by ministering God’s word to the core of my heart, which reinvigorated my free will, intellect, seat of emotions, memories and my frame of reference.

Allen Burnett, Dortell Williams, and Deangelo McVay embraced me and encouraged me to share my story; to embolden me to display my garden, my lifelong garden, with all its rich vegetation inside Lancaster State Prison.

Among the caretakers were Melanie and Rachael. Two beautiful contradictions that helped shape the rough edges of my life by providing resources of rehabilitation, transformation, and restoration. They helped separate the tares from the wheat in the midst of therapeutic talking circles, landscape design advice, and philanthropic distributions.

I appreciate Dave Mashore, who is the program manager of the Insight Garden Program, a.k.a. Uncle Dave. He is a type of Moses who put the final touch on God’s sowing masterpiece. He understands plant chemistry and how to extend a plant’s life expectancy. He knows how to get at the root of trauma, the dying flower within us all, and he knows how to nurture it back to life. It is the recipe for life. It’s what’s necessary for maintaining an internal balance, responding to the environment and evolving from generation to generation.

Armando Craft, an experienced warrior with frontline leadership skills brought me to a place where the soil is rich in fertilizer. He poured rain on my dry land of wounds that healed me in so many ways. He taught me techniques to maintain perma culture while embracing organic factors—things I would have never known.

My garden parents, Beth and Amanda, through the Holy Spirit, brought so much into remembrance about Jesus' plan on this side of eternity.

Now, I'm back operating as the salt of the earth as my stewardship continues to produce replenishment. The supreme challenge was to die to self so I can live through my ministry called *Church on Wheels*. My fruit has harvested like a white coriander seed in God's garden on earth.