



Malankara World Journal

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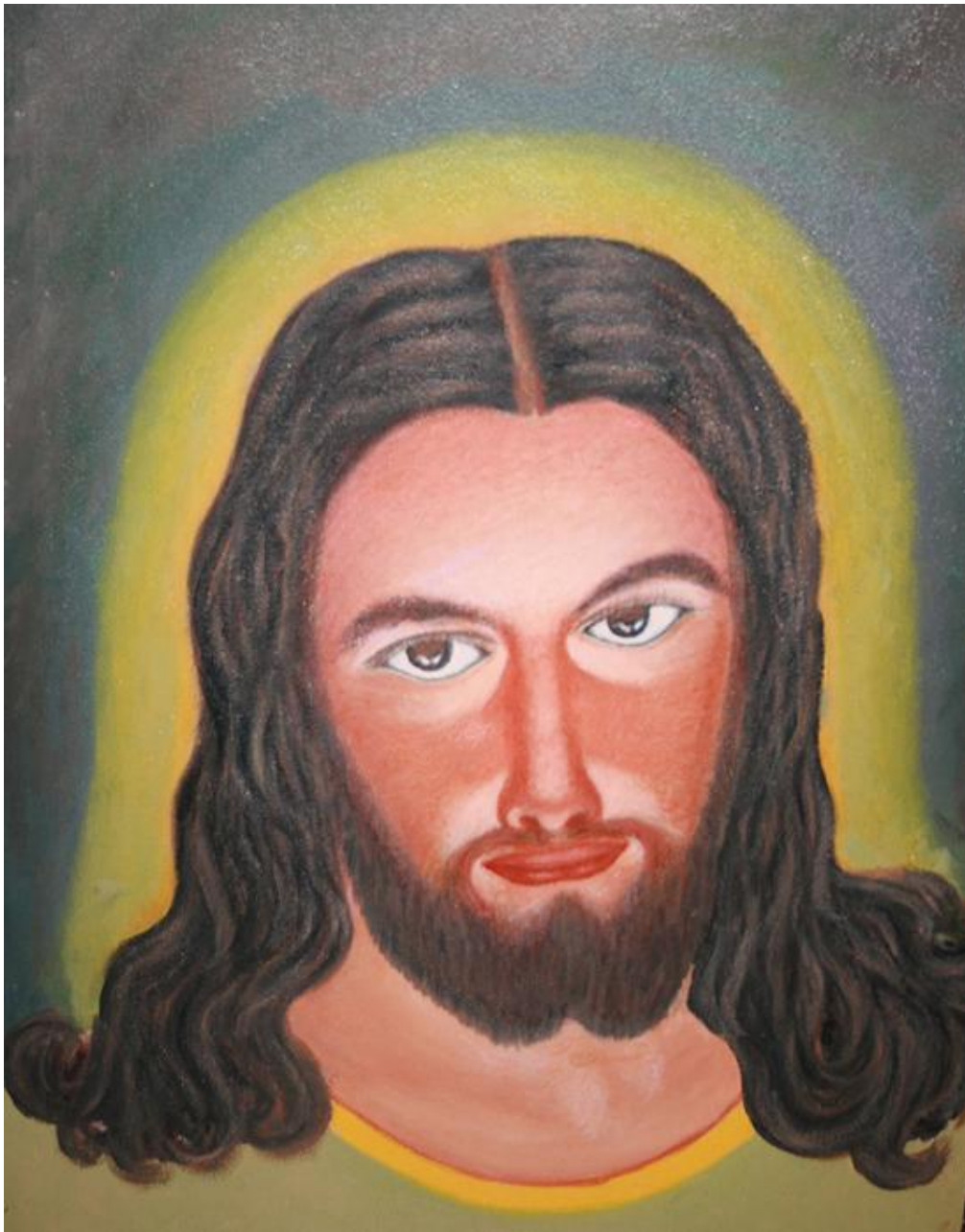
Malankara World Journal

Focus on Church

Volume 2 No. 77 May 17, 2012

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'My God and My Lord' an unfinished painting by Very Rev. Joseph Pukkunnel Corepiscopa, Kothamangalam. Story in Today's Editorial.

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Editor's Note

Sunday, May 27, 2012 is the Pentecost Sunday. It falls 50 days after the Easter Sunday. Pentecost is also regarded as the Birthday of the Church. Since Pentecost is the day when Holy Spirit appeared as promised by Jesus before he ascended into Heaven, our Malankara World Journal issue next week will feature Holy Spirit and Trinity. So, in this issue of the Malankara World Journal, we will take a close look at the role of church in the life of a Christian. The keynote article is by Cardinal Dolan, who is one of my favorite authors and is admired by many. In these days of electronic ministry, many people feel that they do not need church and that they can accomplish everything sitting at home. As we can see after reading the articles, Jesus Christ gave a very important role to the church in his plan for the redemption of mankind. We also feature a special priest of our church in this issue acknowledging the important role played by our clergy.

During my recent trip to Kerala, I had an opportunity to experience, firsthand, some remarkable work done by members of our church. I already wrote about the first step in fulfillment of the dream of Very Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Kunnathu Cor Episcopa that resulted in the laying of the foundation stone for a super specialty Cancer Hospital in Chelad. We will have more details of that in upcoming editions of MW Journal. I also wrote about the award winning work accomplished by the Ladies from St. Mary's Jacobite Church, East Pampady that netted, among others, a house for a poor family. Today, I like to introduce another remarkable and very talented person I had the honor and privilege to visit, viz., Very Rev. Joseph Pukkunnel Cor Episcopa. Joseph achen is one of the unsung heroes of our church.



As you know, one of our recurring theme is, 'God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary work.' When you meet Joseph achen, you will experience this first hand. The first time I met achen was nearly two decades ago when Joseph Achen and Alice Kochamma visited Cleveland, Ohio to be with the family of their youngest son Jijo. Achen gave a series of sermon/devotionals in Cleveland that still ring in my ear. He has a knack of simplifying theology so that common people like us can grasp the significance of it. Achen, at that time, was involved in building houses for poor people in

his parish. He studied building construction techniques here in the US so he can incorporate them in the design of the houses he proposed to build. When he went back to India, he led the effort to build several houses for poor people.

Achen's distinguished service in our church began in 1944 when he was ordained as a Deacon by St. Paulose Mor Athansius (Valia Thirumeni). He was ordained as a priest by LL Vayaliparambil Geevarghese Mor Gregorious Thirumeni. His first assignment was as vicar of Thalakkott St. Mary's Church. To-date, he has served as vicar in 14 churches in Angamali Diocese and 5 churches in Bombay. In 2006, he was elevated as a cor episcopa.

Achen also has a distinguished teaching career. After graduation, he joined Mor Basil School where he served from 1949-1981. In 1978 he received MA in English Literature. From 1981 onwards, he served as Principal of Basil HS School, Baroda and Kalyan St. Thomas School, Bombay.

Our church benefitted greatly from the talents and skill of Joseph achen in remodelling and rebuilding several churches he has served. One such example is the re-building of Mor Ignatius Noorono Church in Chenkara.

Joseph achen has a soft heart towards poor like his Master. He was instrumental in building houses for poor in several churches he served. He dubbed the project as 'Nazareth Housing Project.' Among the houses he built for poor include 4 houses in Kumbanpara St. George Church, 2 houses in Kuttamangalam St. Mary's Church and 1 house in Mulavoor St. Mary's Church.

Although officially retired, Achen is very busy translating Syriac texts for our seminary and writing articles. While visiting him, I also discovered that he has an interest in art. He showed me several paintings he made, mainly on the themes of Jesus and St. Mary. He is currently working on a painting of resurrected Jesus, a reenactment of a painting from the Byzantine era.

Achen and his family are also great hosts. They know how to treat visitors. Knowing that we are from USA and have no opportunity to feast on Kerala delicacies like Kumbil appam, achen had prepared mouth-watering yummy delicacies for us - something I haven't had for a long time.

Our church is extremely fortunate to have persons such as Joseph achen and Alice Kochamma. They continue to serve the church well past their retirement age. (Achen is currently 87.) Jesus told us that a man is known by the fruits he produces. The long list of accomplishments attributed to Joseph Corepiscopa achen undoubtedly attests to the fruitfulness of achen and his family. We can see the light of Jesus reflected on achen's face when one take a look at achen and spend some time with him. I hope that achen will continue producing the good fruits for our church for a long time to come. This reunion was a very memorable one for me and for my wife. It also gave me a new perspective on the important role played by priests in our church.

Dr. Jacob Mathew
Malankara World

This Sunday in Church

Bible Readings for Sunday, May 20

Sunday before Pentecost

Evening

- [St. John 17:13-26](#)

Morning

- [St. Mark 10:17-22](#)

Before Holy Qurbana

- [Leviticus 25:1-13](#)
- [Joshua 1:5-9](#)
- [Isaiah 44:23-25](#)

Holy Qurbana

- [Acts 21:7-9](#)
- [I Corinthians 7:1-2, 25-34, 9:1-10](#)
- [St. John 6:35-46](#)

[Lectionary of the Syrian Orthodox Church](#)

http://www.MalankaraWorld.com/Library/Lectionary/Lec_easter-Koodosh-eetho.htm

Sermons for Sunday, May 20

We have greatly expanded our Sermon Resources. The sermon collection now includes general and classical sermons. This will give a broader appeal to the Gospel Reading for the week. We also added bible commentaries for the bible reading to facilitate study and meditation. Please check it out. This Sunday's lectionary readings are those specified for the Sunday before Pentecost.

[Sermons, Bible Commentaries and Gospel Analyses for the Sunday before Pentecost](#)

http://www.Malankaraworld.com/Library/Sermons/Sermon-of-the-week_sunday-before-pentecost.htm

[More Sermons](#)

This Week's Features

Inspiration for Today: I Asked God

"I asked God, 'How do I get the best out of life?'

God said, 'Face your past without regrets.

Handle your present with confidence, and prepare for the future without fear!'"

Look Back And Thank God.

Look Forward And Trust God.

Look Around And Serve God.

Look Within And Find God!"

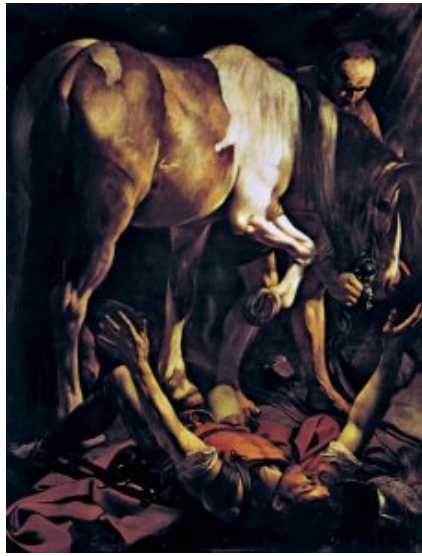
"Without God, our week is:

Mournday, Tearsday, Wasteday, Thirstday, Fightday, Shatterday and Sinday.

So, allow Him to be with you everyday!"

Featured: Jesus and His Church Are One

by Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan



Conversion of St. Paul
Caravaggio 1600-1601.

It's one of my favorite works of art: The Conversion of Saul by Caravaggio. There it is, meekly on display in the corner of the Church of Santa Maria del Popolo in Rome. Saul, the raging persecutor of the followers of Jesus, literally "knocked off his high horse" by the radiance of Jesus, the "light of the world," transformed into a passionate apostle of Christ and His new Church, whom we now venerate as St. Paul.

And what question does Jesus bellow out to the shocked Saul?

"Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

Parse that very carefully. Saul, of course, has been harassing the Church, killing the followers of Jesus.

Yet, note well: Jesus does not inquire, "Why are you persecuting my Church" or "my people" or "my followers."

No! The Lord asks, "Why are you persecuting me?"

Get it? The Lord is saying, "You hurt my Church, you hurt me. The Church and I are one."

That epic lesson came up again yesterday, January 25, the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. (By the way, today, January 26, is the feast of Paul's loyal disciple, St. Timothy—just thought I'd mention it!)

Jesus Christ and His Church are one.

Now, that's a revealed truth that needs repeating today.

What we've got now, if the scholarly research is accurate—and I'm afraid it is—is a growing tendency to split Christ from His Church. More and more seem to be claiming such things as:

"Oh, I've got faith. I just don't need the Church."

"Faith is great; religion stinks."

"I believe. I just don't want to belong."

"I got Jesus. Why bother with the Church?"

"I pray how and when I want. What's the big deal about the Mass and Church on Sunday?"

St. Paul would take exception. So would Jesus.

When God chose Israel he selected not a person but a people. Faith in God is communal by its very nature.

Like our Jewish neighbors, we have always believed that God chooses us and gives us the supernatural gift of faith. It's not that we decide our faith. You bet, we freely decide how firmly and generously we will live out our faith, but we are "born into" a Church. Faith is a gift from God given us on the day of our baptism into His Church.

Just like we're "born into" a natural family. We are a member of a human family. That family is often flawed and imperfect. In fact, there are times when we're angry at it and might even drift away from family events. But, family membership is in our blood.

So it is with our spiritual family, the Church. Oh, we may get upset with her to be sure; we may even drift away from her. But, she never leaves us. The Church is in our supernatural DNA.

Jonathan D. Fitzgerald, writing last week in the Wall Street Journal about the viral video "Why I Hate Religion, But Love Jesus," concludes with this cogent thought:

"Stating that religions build churches at the expense of the poor...turns a blind eye to the single greatest charitable institution on the planet. Blaming religion for wars ignores the fact that the greatest mass murderers in the 20th century—indeed in all of history—killed for nonreligious reasons. And advocating for a kind of Christianity that is free of the 'bondage' of religion opens the door to dangerous theological anarchy that is all too common among young evangelicals and absolutely antithetical to biblical Christianity."

Speaking of Jesus and His Church, the acclaimed French theologian Henri de Lubac exclaimed, "For what would I ever know of Him without Her."

Never give up on your family.

Never give up on Jesus.

Never quit His Church.

For, as St. Paul learned the hard way, Jesus and His Church are one.

Paul's Teaching on the Church

by Pope Benedict XVI

Apostle Paul's first contact with the person of Jesus took place through the testimony of the Christian community of Jerusalem. It was a stormy contact. On knowing the new group of believers, he became immediately its fierce persecutor. He himself appropriately acknowledges it three times in as many letters: "I persecuted the Church of God," he writes (1 Corinthians 15:9; Galatians 1:13; Philippians 3:6), virtually presenting his behavior as the worst crime.

History shows us that one reaches Christ normally through the Church! In a certain sense, it is what happened, as we were saying, also to Paul, who found the Church before finding Jesus. In his case, however, this contact was counterproductive; it did not cause adherence, but rather a violent rejection.

For Paul, adherence to the Church was propitiated by a direct intervention of Christ, who, revealing himself to Paul on the way to Damascus, identified himself with the Church and made Paul understand that to persecute the Church was to persecute him, the Lord.

In fact, the Risen One said to Paul, the persecutor of the Church: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? (Acts 9:4). In persecuting the Church, he was persecuting Christ. Paul converted then, at the same time, to Christ and to the Church.

Thus one understands why the Church was so present in the thoughts, in the heart and in the activity of Paul. In the first place, it was present as he literally founded many Churches in the different cities where he went as evangelizer. When he speaks of his "anxiety for all the Churches" (2 Corinthians 11:28), he is thinking of the various Christian communities established from time to time in Galatia, Ionia, Macedonia and Achaia.

Some of those Churches also gave him worries and displeasures, as happened for example with the Churches of Galatia, which he saw "turning to a different gospel (Galatians 1:6), something which he opposed with spirited determination. Nevertheless, he felt bound to the communities he founded not in a cold and bureaucratic manner, but intensely and passionately.

Thus, for example, he describes the Philippians as "my brethren, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown" (4:1). At other times he compares the different communities to a letter of recommendation unique of its kind: "You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written in your hearts, to be known and read by all men" (2 Corinthians 3:2). At other times he shows them in their encounters a true and proper sentiment not only of paternity but even of maternity, as when he turns to those he is addressing beseeching them as "My little children, with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you!" (Galatians 4:19; cf. also 1 Corinthians 4:14-15; 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8).

In his letters, Paul also illustrates for us his doctrine on the Church as such. **Well known is his original definition of the Church as "body of Christ,"** which we do not find in other Christian authors of the first century (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 4:12; 5:30; Colossians 1:24). We find the most profound root of this amazing designation of the Church in the sacrament of the body of Christ.

St. Paul says: "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Corinthians 10:17). In the Eucharist itself Christ gives us his body and makes us his body. In this connection, St. Paul says to the Galatians: "you are all one in Christ" (Galatians 3:28).

With all this Paul leads us to understand that not only is there a belonging of the Church to Christ, but also a certain form of equivalence and identification of the Church with Christ himself. It is from here, therefore, that the greatness and nobility of the Church derives, that is, of all of us who are part of it: Our being members of Christ, is almost as an extension of his personal presence in the world. And from here follows, naturally, our duty to really live in conformity with Christ.

From here derive also Paul's exhortations in regard to the several charisms which animate and structure the Christian community. They can all be referred back to a single source, which is the Spirit of the Father and the Son, knowing well that in the Church there is no one who is lacking them, because, as the Apostle writes, "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:7).

What is important, however, is that all the charisms cooperate together for the building up of the community and that they not become instead a motive of laceration. To this end, Paul asks himself rhetorically: "Is Christ divided?" (1 Corinthians 1:13). He knows well and teaches us that it is necessary "to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call" (Ephesians 4:3-4).

Obviously, to underline the need for unity does not mean to hold that one must make ecclesial life uniform and flat according to one way of operating. Elsewhere Paul teaches "Do not quench the Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 5:19), namely, to generously make room for the unforeseeable dynamism of the charismatic manifestations of the Spirit, who is an always new source of energy and vitality.

But if there is a particularly important criterion for Paul it is mutual edification: "Let all things be done for edification" (1 Corinthians 14:26). Everything should concur to build the ecclesial fabric in an orderly way, not only without deadlocks, but also without flights or tears.

One of Paul's letters goes so far as to **present the Church as the bride of Christ** (cf. Ephesians 5:21-33). He thus takes up again a prophetic metaphor, which made of the people of Israel the spouse of God of the Covenant (cf. Hosea 2:4.21; Isaiah 54:5-8): He thus expresses to what point the relations are intimate between Christ and his Church, be it because she is the object of the most tender love on the part of her Lord, or because love must be mutual and we, in as much as members of the Church, must show him a passionate fidelity.

In conclusion, therefore, at stake is a relationship of communion: the relationship -- to call it in some way -- "vertical" between Jesus Christ and all of us, but also "horizontal" between all those who are distinguished in the world by the fact of "calling on the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord" (1 Corinthians 1:2).

This is our definition: We are part of those who call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus we understand to what point we must desire the fulfillment of what Paul himself yearns for when writing to the Corinthians: "But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you" (1 Corinthians 14:24-25).

So should be our liturgical meetings. A non-Christian who enters one of our assemblies should be able to say at the end: "Truly God is with you." Let us ask the Lord that we might live in this way, in communion with Christ and in communion among ourselves.

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Continuing our reflections on the Apostle Paul, we now turn to his teaching on the Church. St. Paul's encounter with the risen Lord on the way to Damascus led him to understand that, in persecuting the Church, he was persecuting Christ himself. Paul was thus converted both to Christ and the Church. We can understand, then, why the Church plays so important a part in his thought and work.

Paul founded several Churches during his missionary journeys, and he demonstrated, through his letters and visits, a constant and lively "concern for all the Churches" (2 Corinthians 11:28). ***For Paul, the Church is truly the "Body of Christ," an extension, as it were, of the risen Lord's presence in the world, enlivened, structured and built up by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.***

The Pauline image of the Church as the Bride of Christ (cf. Ephesians 5:21ff.) likewise stresses the relationship of fidelity and love uniting the Lord and all the members of his body. Through the prayers of St. Paul, may we enter ever more deeply into this mystery of communion, in order to testify more effectively to Christ's presence in our world.

Adapted From: General Audience, St. Peter's Square, November 22, 2006

The Secret to the Early Church

Scripture: Acts 4

Acts 4:7 They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

Author J.B. Phillips, after spending 14 years translating the New Testament, sat back and reflected on his most lasting impressions. He kept returning to the book of Acts and its portrait of an infant church. "The sick are not merely prayed about," said Phillips. "They are healed, often suddenly and dramatically ... Human nature is changed. The fresh air of Heaven blows gustily through these pages.

"The early church lived dangerously, but never before has such a handful of people exerted such widespread influence ... To put it shortly, the lasting excitement which follows the reading of the book is this: The thing works!"

Who Was Behind the Success?

Why did it work? Acts points decisively to the power of God, through his Holy Spirit. Luke carefully notes that every major decision of the young church was made under the Spirit's guidance. Indeed, some have suggested that Acts should really be titled Acts of the Holy Spirit because of his dominant role. Luke mentions the Holy Spirit 57 times in Acts.

The disciples waited on the Spirit in Jerusalem before beginning to preach (see Acts 2:4). According to Luke, the Holy Spirit fell on each new group of believers: on Jews (see Acts 4:23,31), then on Samaritans (see Acts 8:14-17), then on Gentiles (see Acts 10:44-45) and finally on John the Baptist's disciples (see Acts 19:1-6).

For Their Good

As the church grew, the disciples gradually began to understand what Jesus had meant when he said, "It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" (John 16:7). Although Jesus himself departed, God became present in each one of them, making his activity in the world more widespread than ever before.

The Spirit personally directed each major advance of the church. He sent Philip into the desert to meet an Ethiopian (see Acts 8:26-29), set apart missionaries in Antioch (see Acts 13:1-2), guided the first big church council (see Acts 15:1-29) and helped plan Paul's itinerary (see Acts 13:4; 16:6). As presented in Acts, the Spirit was no vague mist but a living person who spoke, guided in decisions and fueled the church with the energy of faith.

Church is Established by Jesus

by Greg Laurie

"On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." - (Matthew 16:18)

I have noticed that it has become popular of late to critique the church. I read about one church that did a 2011 Easter campaign in which they put up signs all over town that read, "Church sucks." Supposedly the idea was to attract would-be churchgoers to their website. But I was actually offended by it. How dare anyone say that church sucks? Who are they to say that about the church?

Do I think the church is perfect? No. Do I think the church has flaws? Yes, because people like me are in it. But I also know the Bible says that Jesus loves the church (see Ephesians 5:25). So I would never speak critically of that which Jesus loves.

Some are disillusioned by the church today. They are bitter with the church and complain about the hypocrites who are in the church. But there is no such thing as a church without hypocrites, so we need to stop looking for it. Instead, we need to realize that Jesus established the church, and as followers of Christ, we are to be a part of it.

The church is the only organization that Jesus ever started. He said of the church, "On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). Every believer needs to be an active part of the church, because it is in the church that we learn about God together. It is in the church that we worship together. It is in the church that we find accountability to one another. It is in the church that we discover and use our spiritual gifts.

You simply cannot be the Christian that God has called you to be without being a part of the church.

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Why Impostors Love the Church

by Russell Moore

Recently I read a book that kept me awake a couple of nights. It was about "Clark Rockefeller," and the scare quotes are important. The man was neither "Clark" nor "Rockefeller." He was a German immigrant who crafted an identity as an heir of one of America's wealthiest dynasties. He married, fathered a child, and was involved in fraud, theft, and maybe even murder. And no one ever knew, until the very end.

What made me squirm was that fact that the fake Rockefeller's inroad to all his deception were churches and relationships, particularly with women. He would make the connections he needed in local congregations, and he would charm the women there. At the same time, he would parasitically imitate the men, watching and mirroring back to them their convictions and opinions, even the inflections of their voices. But, behind all of that, there was nothing real but a predatory appetite.

The New Testament warns us, of course, about spiritual impostors. Sometimes these "wolves" are there to introduce subtly false doctrine. But, just as often, it seems, these spiritual carnivores hold to true doctrine, at least on the surface. But they use this doctrine and service for predatory ends. The sons of Eli, for instance, use their priestly calling

to co-opt the fat of the offering and to lay with the women at the altar (1 Sam. 2). Virtually every New Testament letter warns us about the same phenomenon (e.g., 2 Pet. 2; Jude).

But why, when there is so much opportunity for debauchery out there in the world around us, do such people choose the church?

First of all, I think its because deception can look a lot like discipleship. A disciple is like a son learning from his father, Jesus tells us. The student resembles his teacher. That's good, and right. But the satanic powers turn all good things for evil. A spiritual impostor can mimic such discipleship when he's, in fact, just "casing the joint," watching the mores, learning the phrases, mimicking the convictions. It can seem like the passing down of the faith when, in reality, it's an almost vampiric taking on of another identity, all for the sake of some appetite or other.

Second, I think it's because these impostors are looking for something they can't find in bars and strip clubs. Many of them "feed" off of innocence itself. The Apostle Paul, therefore, warns of those who "creep into households, taking captive weak women burdened down with sins" (2 Tim. 3:6). The impostors are able to gain power over the weak not only by deceiving them but by morally compromising them.

Often these victims are drawn, for reasons good and bad, to spiritual authority. The impostor mimics this authority, sometimes with a precision almost to the point of identity theft. But use it to defile, sapping away what seems to them to be innocence as a vampire would lap up blood.

Finally, the church often draws such impostors because of a perversion of the Christian doctrine of grace. The Christian gospel offers a complete forgiveness of sin, and not only that, a fresh start as a new creation. But both Jesus and the apostles warn us that this can easily be perverted into a kind of anti-christ license. Faith is not real without repentance, and faith is not like that of the demons, simply assenting to truth claims. Faith works itself out in love. Faith follows after the lordship of King Jesus. Faith takes up a cross.

But a notion of "grace" apart from lordship can provide excellent cover for spiritual impostors. That's why virtually every sex predator I've heard of compares himself, or is compared by one of those on whom he's preying, as a latter-day King David. This is often the case even while this person continues to run rampant in his sin against the Body of Christ. Those who seek to hold accountable, or even just to warn the flock, are then presented as "unmerciful" or "graceless" or unwilling to help along the "struggling."

This often leads to a church that then loses its ability to be the presence of Christ. The church, desiring to be seen to be merciful, loses any aspect of the merciful ministry of Christ because we don't do what he called us to do: to tend the flock of God. Or, we are so burned over by the presence of predators among us that we lose the ability to trust anyone. Yes, there is Demas, and yes, there is Alexander the Coppersmith. But there's Timothy and Titus too.

Moreover, the presence of impostors can cause us to lose confidence in the church itself. But how can that be when Jesus warns us from the very beginning that we must be watchful of this. The apostolic Word gives us confidence that spiritual predators, like Pharaoh's magicians, "will not get very far" (2 Tim. 3:9).

There's nothing more enraging than the sound of a lamb bleating in a wolf's mouth. But the Shepherd is coming.

About the Author:

Russell Moore is Dean of the School of Theology and Senior Vice President for Academic Administration at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and executive director of the Carl F. H. Henry Institute for Evangelical Engagement. Dr. Moore has authored several books.

Source: Christianity.com Daily Update

Turning Bad into Beautiful

By Craig Ballantyne

Late on a Friday afternoon is the worst time to receive an email containing bad news related to business. It leaves you with the entire weekend to think about the problem because it can't be resolved until everyone returns to work on

Monday. Unfortunately, I had this happen to me recently.

Due to a boneheaded decision on my part, a joint venture partner and I had a falling out. I take all the blame. It was entirely my fault.

The email not only voiced their displeasure but also ominously requested a phone conversation early the next week. Thanks to my inability to compartmentalize negative thoughts I spent the entire weekend with the impending uncomfortable conversation dominating my thoughts.

It's much like when a catchy tune gets stuck in your head, except this was the stressful, "have-nightmares-about-it" version. I kept running through the phone call over and over again in my mind, trying to figure out how it would go.

There were two things that helped me work my way out of it, and turn bad into good.

First, there was this quote that I had posted a few days earlier. As this quote says, when you mess up, you are actually being given a chance to learn a lot about yourself.

"Life's challenges are not supposed to paralyze you, they're supposed to help you discover who you are." –
Bernice J. Reagon

Second, I have an incredible network of people who can keep me level headed in these situations. After I explained the situation to ETR Publisher Matt Smith, he said something that was both wise and helpful.

"When something in life occurs that is troubling, we are not supposed to dwell on the thing itself. Instead, the focus should be on our obligation to turn this bad thing into something beautiful. It's not easy. But, if you focus your creative energy away from self torture and onto 'how you can turn this into something beautiful' pretty remarkable things start to happen."

And so over that weekend, as I tried to avoid mentally torturing myself, I discovered something 'beautiful'. I realized that in order to get through the weekend and to get over the stress, I was re-doubling my efforts at doing good things.

I spent more time in my forums answering questions on a more extensive level than normal. I put more thought and effort into Turbulence Training and ETR articles for the next two weeks. I worked harder on next month's Turbulence Training workouts for my fitness business.

This "focus on good" elevated me from my bad mood, relieved the pressure, and turned the world positive again.

To make matters even better, my call with the upset joint venture partner turned out to be positive. My apology was accepted, and instead of conflict, we are now in co-operation. I've gone from embarrassed to enthusiastic, and look forward to working with this company on future products that will help them and you.

There's a lesson here for all of us.

When things go bad, double up your efforts on doing good things. It makes you feel better, and may help even the karmic scale. You can turn bad news into something beautiful by taking positive action towards your mission and vision. Live positive.

As Dave Kekich says, "High self-esteem can only come from moral productivity and achievement." So when things turn bad in business for you, turn them beautiful by taking action, being productive, and improving the lives of your customers and clients.

Hopefully you can take a beautiful message from my bad mistake.

Please also realize that turning something bad into something beautiful is not a fix limited to business. It can be applied to other areas of our life. For example, let's say you are going through a divorce or loss of love of any kind. Everyone's been there. We've all had bad break-ups.

But understand it's probably not your fault. Whatever led to that loss of love is their problem, not yours. And so it's not a time for you to wallow in self-pity, for that will do you no good.

Instead, this is the time to be at your most beautiful. If you're funny, you shouldn't hide inside watching reruns of "When Harry Met Sally". You should get out and get together with your friends who love you for being funny. If you're a natural born-organizer, you shouldn't be at home torturing yourself and analyzing what went wrong. Instead you should be organizing a party with all of the people who matter to you and still love you.

Here's what you need to do to start turning the balance of bad into beautiful. You need to simply take action, get moving, and build some momentum. Taking a walk, a simple stroll in some fresh air, is the easiest way to get started on your road to recovery.

During my tumultuous weekend, what helped me get better were the multiple dog walks out on the farm that I had to do each day with my chocolate lab. The walks allowed me to clear my head and use my creativity to identify solutions to the current issue. In fact, just one of those walks brought me six ideas I could use to fix the mess I had found myself in.

Don't dwell on the negative. Instead, focus on what you can do to turn the bad into beautiful. As Matt said, flip your creative energy from self-torture to making the mistake into a positive opportunity. When you identify good things that you can do or the benefits of this new life change, remarkable things will happen. Change your perspective and opportunity arises out of the ashes.

You'll find solutions for your problem. I promise.

That's not bad.

That's beautiful.

[About the Author: Craig Ballantyne is the author of Financial Independence Monthly, a program that shows you how to achieve your financial independence in the new economy.]

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Health Tip: Three Things We Can Learn from Dying Hospice Patients

The Strongest, Most Content are Those with Faith, Therapist Says

Does our society hold too narrow a view of what defines strength?

The things many would point to as indicators – youth, wealth, a fully capable body – fall short, says Charles Gourgey, a veteran hospice music therapist and author of *Judeochristianity* (www.judeochristianity.org), a book that explores the unifying faith elements of Judaism and Christianity.

"Youth is ephemeral, abundant wealth is for just a few, and we all experience some kind of disability, usually at several points in our lives," he says. "A car accident, the loss of a job or a home, grief over a loved one's dying: such things can happen to anyone and easily destroy our happiness."

Gourgey says some of the greatest strength he's ever seen was demonstrated by certain of his patients facing imminent death.

"Some people have complete love and grace when facing death – it's how they've lived their lives, and at the end of their lives, it's what supports them," he says. "Those who, at the end, are peaceful, grateful and confident share some common characteristics."

They are:

- Their love is non-self-interested. When we have awareness of and deepest respect and reverence for the individuality of others, we overcome the high walls of ego and experience a tremendous sense of freedom, says Gourgey. He says he continues to be inspired by patients who cared more for the well-being of others, including their

fellow hospice patients, than themselves while facing their own mortality. Non-self-interested love – loving others for themselves without expecting or needing anything in return – is the greatest form of love, he says.

- They had an unwavering faith that transcended religious dogma. Faith is the knowledge that there is more to life than the apparent randomness of the material world; a sense that we are known to a greater reality and will return to that reality. No matter what their religion, the patients who were most at peace with their life's journey were those who had faith in something higher than themselves. The problem with many concepts of faith, Gourgey continues, is that people attach specific doctrines to it, which means some people will always be excluded. A unifying faith – that all people are connected and love is the force that binds us – allows for trust, compassion and caring.

- They were motivated by an innate sense of what is good. They didn't get mad at themselves; they didn't beat themselves up for mistakes they might have made in the past. That's because they were always guided by their sense of what is good, and they made their choices with that in mind. That did not prevent them from making some bad choices or mistakes over the course of their lives, Gourgey says. But when they erred, they addressed the problem with the same loving compassion they extended to others. "Their compassion overcame even any self-hate they may have experienced."

Many patients left lasting impressions on Gourgey, and taught him valuable life lessons. He remembers one in particular.

"She was in hospice, a retired nurse who had developed a rare, incurable disease," he recalls. "She would go around every day, checking to see what she could do for the other patients. She fetched blankets for a 104-year-old lady who always complained of cold feet. She sat with and listened to patients who needed company and someone to talk to. She had an attentive awareness about her, like she was fully in touch with her soul."

Gourgey was with the woman when she died.

"She was radiant, she just glowed. She kept repeating how grateful she was for her life," he says. "It was as if the life of love she'd lived was there to transport and support her at the end."

About Charles "Carlos" Gourgey

Charles "Carlos" Gourgey, PhD, LCAT, MT-BC, is a board-certified and New York state-licensed music therapist. He has more than 20 years of experience working in hospices and nursing homes, and for 10 years was music therapist for Cabrini Hospice in New York City. He has published articles on psychology and religion in various journals.

[Read more health tips in Malankara World Health Section](#)

Recipe: Italian Chicken Soup

Ingredients:

1/2 cup EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL
6-8 cloves garlic, minced
2 cup chopped carrots (4- med.)
2 cup chopped celery (4 Stalks w/ leaves)
1 1/2 cup chopped sweet onions (2- med or 1 large)
1/2 cup green bell Pepper diced
1/2 cup red bell Pepper diced
1/2 cup orange bell Pepper diced
1/2 cup yellow bell Pepper diced
1 bunch scallions - diced
2 pound skinned, boned chicken breast,
(cut into strips and then 1/2-inch chunks)
12 cups chicken broth
2 - 14 1/2 oz. Cans diced tomatoes (Italian seasoning)
1 can condensed tomato soup

1 can corn
1 tsp. ground black pepper
1 tsp. ground white pepper
1/2 tsp. Oregano
1/2 tsp. Sweet Basil
Just a pinch of Rosemary
8 oz. Pasta
1 zucchini, diced

Preparation:

1. In a large heavy pot heat oil over medium heat. Add garlic and saute 1 minute. Stir in Carrots, celery, peppers and onions. Cook 4 to 6 minutes, until crisp-tender.
2. Add chicken and cook 4 to 6 minutes, stirring often.
3. Add broth and tomatoes, soup and scallions, and remaining spices, increase heat to high, cover and bring to boil. Reduce heat to simmer and cook 30-40 minutes.
4. Stir in zucchini and allow to soften. Stir in pasta (pre-cooked separately/rinsed)
5. Ladle into bowls and sprinkle with chopped parsley, if desired.

Yield: 16 servings

The soup is even better the second day. The pasta will absorb quite a bit of the broth. If necessary, add some more chicken broth when you reheat it.

[More Recipes/ Cooking Tips at Malankara World Cafe](#)

Family Special: A Memo From A Child To A Parent

This must be read by all parents to understand your children's emotions and behaviors.

Don't spoil me. I know quite well that I ought not to have all I ask for, I'm only testing you.

Don't be afraid to be firm with me. I prefer it, it makes me feel secure.

Don't let me form bad habits. I have to rely on you to detect them in a early stage.

Don't make me feel smaller than I am. It only makes me behave stupidly "big."

Don't correct me in front of people, if you can help it. I'll take much more notice if you talk quietly with me in private.

Don't make me feel that my mistakes are sins. It upsets my sense of values.

Don't protect me from consequences. I need to learn the painful way sometimes.

Don't be too upset when I say "I hate you". Sometimes it isn't you I hate but your power over me.

Don't take too much notice of my ailments. Sometimes they get me attention I don't need.

Don't nag. If you do, I shall have to protect myself by being deaf.

Don't forget that I cannot explain myself as well as I should like. That's why I am not always accurate.

Don't put me off when I ask questions. If you do you'll find that I stop asking and seek my information elsewhere.

Don't be inconsistent. That completely confuses me and makes me lose faith in you.

Don't tell me my fears are silly. They are terribly real and you can do much to reassure me if you try to understand.

Don't ever suggest that you are perfect or infallible. It gives me too great a shock when I discover that your neither.

Don't ever think that it is beneath your dignity to apologize to me. An honest apology makes me surprisingly warm towards you.

Don't forget I love experimenting. I couldn't get along without it, so please put up with it.

Don't forget how quickly I am growing up. It must be difficult for you to keep pace with me, but please try to.

Don't forget that I don't thrive without lots of love and understanding, but I don't need to tell you that do I?

Humor: Who Needs Prayers?

A lady approaches a priest and tells him, "Father, I have a problem. I have these two talking female parrots, but they only know how to say one thing. They keep saying "Hi, we're hot. Do you want a date?"

"That's terrible!" the priest exclaimed. "But I do have a solution to your problem. Bring your two parrots over to my house and I will put them with my two male talking parrots to whom I have taught to pray and read the bible."

"My parrots will then teach your parrots to stop saying that terrible phrase, and your female parrots will learn to pray and worship. "

So the next day, the lady brings her female parrots to the priest's house. The priest's two male parrots are holding rosary beads and praying in their cage. The lady puts her female talking parrots in with the male parrots, and the female parrots say, "Hi, we're hot. Do you want a date?"

One male parrot looks over at the other male parrot and screams, "Put your Bible away Idiot, our prayers have been answered!!!!!!!"

About Malankara World

With over 6000 articles and hundreds of links to outside resources covering all aspects of Syriac Orthodoxy that are of interest to Family, Malankara World is the premier source for information for Malankara Diaspora. In addition to articles on spirituality, faith, sacraments, sermons, devotionals, etc., Malankara World also has many general interest articles, health tips, Food and Cooking, Virtual Travel, and Family Specific articles. Please [visit Malankara World by clicking here](http://www.MalankaraWorld.com/Library/default.htm) or cut and paste the link on your browser: <http://www.MalankaraWorld.com/Library/default.htm>

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