

From Dave's Laptop

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Would you work for this organization?

Jeff Cotter was wearing jeans as he got on the plane. The man seated next to him was quite a contrast, the very image of GQ in his Brooks Brothers suit, designer shirt, and power tie. Quite full of himself, the man waxed eloquent to Jeff, his captive audience.

His business was women's fitness, and he had plans to establish his salons throughout California. Once that territory was conquered, he would expand the empire by going nationwide. His goal of being a millionaire by age thirty was quite within reach, he thought. After dominating the conversation for a very long time, the man finally turned to Jeff, and, looking askance at Jeff's jeans, asked, "And what is it that you do?"

Jeff thought he would have a little fun with this man while making an important point. "It's interesting that we have similar business interests," Jeff said. "You are in the body-changing business; I'm in the personality-changing business. We apply basic theocratic principles to accomplish indigenous personality modification."

Not wanting to appear ignorant, Jeff's companion said, "You know, I've heard of that. But do you have an office here in the city?"

"Oh, we have many offices. We have offices up and down the state. In fact, we're national; we have offices in every state, including Alaska and Hawaii." The listener searched his mind for the Wall Street listing for this company as Jeff continued, "As a matter of fact, we've gone international. And management has a plan to put at least one office in every country in the world in this business era." Jeff paused for dramatic effect. "Do you have that in your business plan?"

"Well, no, not yet," admitted the young man. "You mentioned management. How do they make it work?"

"It's a family concern," said Jeff. "There's a Father and Son . . . they run everything."

"They must have a lot of capital," Mr. MBA said longingly.

"You mean money? Yes, I suppose so. No one knows exactly how much it takes, but we never worry because there's never a shortage. The Boss always seems to have enough. He's a very creative guy. And the money is, well, just there. In fact, those in the organization have a saying about our Boss. We say 'He owns the cattle on a thousand hills.'"

"Oh, he's into ranching too?"

"No, it's just a saying we use to indicate his wealth."

Now totally hooked, the man said to Jeff, "What about with you?"



“The employees? They’re something to see. They have a ‘Spirit’ that pervades the organization. It works like this. The Father and Son love each other so much that their love filters down through the organization so that we all find ourselves loving one another, too. I know this sounds old fashioned in a world like ours, but I have people in the organization who are willing to die for me. Do you have that in your business?”

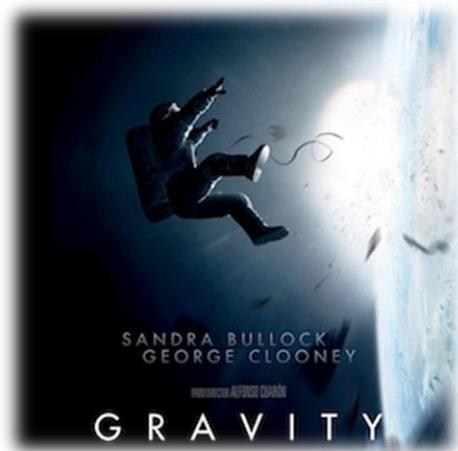
“What about the benefits?” This guy was ready to abandon his measly plan and hire on.

“They’re substantial. I have complete life insurance, fire insurance—all the basics. You might not believe this, but it’s true: I have holdings in a mansion that’s being built right now for my retirement.”

“You know, one thing bothers me. I’ve read the journals, and if your business is all that you say it is, why haven’t I heard about it before now?”

“That’s a good question,” Jeff replied. “After all, we have a two-thousand year-old tradition—**it’s called the church.**”

Yes, WE are the body in whom Christ dwells. Through His guidance, the church has and is penetrating every part of the globe, all under the management of the triune God. We have an employee training manual that has been translated into thousands of languages. We gather in cathedrals, modest buildings, houses, basements—and Jesus is present to all.¹
So what S.H.A.P.E. are you in?



Changing thoughts, I was interested to see that the *Gravity* film recently won awards for “Best Picture,” “Best Director,” “Best Cinematography,” and “Best Editing” from the Los Angeles Film Critics Association. I actually thought the plot was pretty lame, although the cinematography was indeed spectacular.

All kinds of new techniques had to be invented in order to create the illusion of weightlessness throughout the movie, and that reminded me of a famous quote from Arthur Clarke, the science fiction writer who wrote the script for *2001: A Space Odyssey*, among other things. This quote is known as “Clarke’s Third Law”: “**Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.**”²

It occurs to me that Clarke’s insight may offer help in understanding what we call “the virgin birth” at Christmastime as well as miracles in general. As Creator, God is by definition the Chief Technologist of the Universe, and what appears to us as “miracle” is surely consistent with the nature of reality in ways far beyond our ability to grasp it. **How hard, indeed, would it be for the One who spoke all that is into being to change one cell?**³

Dave

¹ Greg Ogden, *Unfinished Business: Returning the Ministry to the People of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990, 2003), pp. 47-48.

² Arthur C. Clarke, *Profiles of the Future* (revised edition, 1973); see http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Arthur_C._Clarke

³ For further reading, see C. S. Lewis, *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*, available in hardback, paperback, and e-book.