

GAMMA 2017

1 Cor 1:1-17

Case 1

Read Appendix 1

Questions

a. Are the criteria of sainthood in the article consistent with the bible?

The criteria of sainthood is unbiblical as they involve miracle performed by praying in the name of a former Pope. No where in the bible are we told to pray to other dead Christians

b. What are the biblical criteria and what are the Roman Catholic Church criteria compare and contrast?

Biblical criteria is only one..those made holy by their union or faith in Jesus. The RC view is based on miracles and is nowhere seen in the bible. There is no emphasis on holiness as in the bible.

c. What are the possible dangers in the understanding of sainthood?

The danger is a divide between the normal Christian and a specific sub group of super Christians where supernatural healing occurs in their name after death. Ordinary Christians will not therefore look carefully at their own calling to be holy and leave it to the "professionals".

d. If we are all saints then what is the most important function of a saint?

We are saints by the grace of God because it is not by our own merit or work of good works or healing. We are saints not because of any good work hence we are saints by grace because we are made holy or sanctified by our union with Jesus. This translates in to our legal standing of righteousness before God which is quite apart from our actual personal ethical righteousness on the way we actually live. The most important function of the saint is thus to rely on Him to continue to make us holy in ethical conduct. We will be perfected at the end.

e. How are we each planning to live out our calling as saints or do we even have a plan?

f. How can a group like a Gamma Life group help each one live out our ultimate calling in life? How can a the Gamma program help us to achieve this?

CASE 2

We all struggle with love for the glory of man which is often the cause of conflict in church hence it would be good to spend time in the group to go around and take one marker each to describe if you too struggle with the love for the glory of man

a. So how do we know if love for the glory of man has gained a stronghold in our life? What are the possible markers of this in our lives please discuss

1. You measure your success by what you see and feel in the moment. (eg. If other's don't appreciate what you've done or your ministry isn't flourishing, it must be a failure and not worth continuing.)
2. You are motivated and unmotivated in your work, friendships, church, etc., by the praise or lack of praise of those around you.
3. Your decisions are often driven by what others will think.
4. You are easily discouraged, irritated, or angry when your efforts are not appreciated by others or when others receive credit for something you have done.
5. When others praise you, you begin to feel self-confident in your own abilities, rather than relying on the Lord to lead and provide.
6. You are more drawn to the type of work and serving opportunities that will be noticed and praised by others.
7. You struggle with competitiveness and envy when someone else succeeds or is given praise (even within the body of Christ).
8. You measure success with a short-term view, rather than an eternal one.
9. You spend less time in the Word and prayer and more time perfecting your craft, skill, job, or reputation.
10. You only portray the admirable aspects of your life to those around you (in church, on social media, etc.)
11. You find comfort in making sure others see your pain and shower you with attention because of it.
12. Your relationships only go so deep that your struggles are not revealed.
13. Your emotions and how you feel about yourself are constantly swayed by what you assume others think of you.
14. You only share a surface level of your faith out of fear of offending someone or giving

the perception that you are weak, strange, or narrow-minded.

b. Here are 12 markers of a person who lives for God's glory rather than their own please discuss amongst yourselves if you feel that this is what it is like in your lives and if not please share with others how to move towards this direction

1. You find joy in Christ's name being exalted, even if you receive no attention or praise in the process.
2. When others praise you, you feel genuinely humbled, undeserving, and overwhelmed by God's grace in your life.
3. You persevere in doing good and find joy in serving Christ, even when it isn't glamorous and goes unappreciated.
4. You find pleasure in exercising the unique gifts that God has given you, no matter the outcome or level of success it brings. On the other hand, you are able to let these gifts go if the Lord chooses to allow it.
5. You are excited for those who do well and compassionate and gracious towards those who fail.
6. You do not measure success by the world's terms, but by the truth of God's Word.
7. You are honest about your struggles, failures, and sin, recognizing that you are in the process of sanctification alongside every other Christ follower.
8. You do not feel the need to portray a certain type of life on social media and do not need a certain amount of likes, comments, shares, friends, or followers to feel good about yourself.
9. You respect church leadership (and others) with the goal of glorifying Christ, rather than needing to be seen and heard.
10. You seek to know and pursue what Christ values more than climbing the ladder of success and seeking what the world values.
11. You extend grace and forgiveness to those around you, seeking unity in Christ, rather than self-protection and justice.
12. You do not feel threatened or intimidated by those who seem to be more spiritually mature than you, but you humbly desire to learn from others, resting in the knowledge that we are all saved by grace and in different places in our faith.

CASE 3

Read Appendix 2

Compare and contrast Blaise Pascal's writings of his life transforming experience of God as a spiritual reality vs the writings of Michael Lee of Full gospel businessman sharing in the Malaysian Christianity website

1. What strikes you about both?

Blaise Pascals encounter with God is a mixture of holy fear..he is terrified of being inadequate in the presence of an awesome holy God. He is mournful and painfully aware of his sin in the presence of God.

Yet on the other hand he is totally enamoured with Christ and wants total surrender to Him. The issue central in his experience is God's holiness and his sin. Pascal seeks God's face.

Michael's testimony is only about himself and what God did for him, even the bible verse is all about the blessings and no mention of sin or the sufferings one goes through as Christians. He seeks God's hands and not His face.

One sharing is about a transformative experience with an awesome powerful real God who is only interested in the main issue that separates man from God

These cases are optional for the more advanced students

CASE 4

Lee Cheow Hwa is very troubled as he comes from the Kalimantan Pentecostal Church , a multicongregational church where there have been great turmoil. The pastor Rev Moses Yong is known of be impatient and in his first meeting with one the congregation's leaders he reacted badly to their criticisms of him and sacked all 5 in the committee on the spot. This caused much turmoil amongst the particular congregation who lost their leaders. However as far as he is concerned the pastor has been good to Cheow Hwa as he ministered to his family when he was sick , down and out. Cheow Hwa is convinced he is a good man and defended him whenever there was any criticism about Rev Moses. Some other leaders tried to mediate in the case and persuade the pastor to restore the sacked leaders who have had to leave the church. They arranged for the 5 to apologise to Rev Moses in a meeting but Ps Moses stood firm he instead doubled down and said the five were evil and would not restore them. In the months that followed Rev Moses fell out with another two pastors and sacked them. One of them was because he felt he had no calling although he had been serving full time for the last 7 years and gave up his business to go full time. The other pastor tried to defend him and in the process upset Moses who then did not renew his contract as well. A portion of the church was very unhappy as they were attached to the pastors who were dismissed. Another portion was upset with Rev Moses because of the sacking of the 5 in the committee and then there was the faction who would support Rev Moses no matter what. Other leaders grew unhappy and the church attendance dropped 50% over the ensuing year.

Then came the time for renewal of pastor Moses Yongs contract and he needed 75% majority to continue but at this time many folk were not happy with him. The leaders in the church council stood by Moses Yong but other leaders did not want him renewed. They said Moses has the Lord's authority and wisdom and we must all listen to him.

1. What was wrong with Rev Moses and his fellow leaders? Why do you think that Rev Moses was not willing to forgive and restore the 5 committee members? In what way does his actions cause divisiveness in church

Pastor Moses Yong who exhibits none of the love nor godliness in a leader. He has a judgemental and hard spirit. The leaders are clearly split basically because of personal loyalty. They are his board members and are too close to see the problem. His failure is also their failure hence they will tend to circle their wagons in a defensive mode and claim the authority of their position in order to stifle dissent. They are basking in his reflected glory in psychological terms. Any attack on Rev Moses is an attack on them. Mr Lee is also clearly conflicted as on one hand he is loyal to the pastor and on the other hand he clearly sees there is wrong in what he did. Rev Moses was not willing to forgive and restore as he was cornered into defending his pride and self-esteem as they were unhappy against him by the congregation which has lost the 5 leaders. He could not admit he was wrong as he based his self-esteem on his spiritual standing as the pastor in charge and had to be right or seen to be right. He had to maintain discipline for them to respect him. He had to be feared by the rebellious leaders. His actions caused divisiveness along the lines of loyalty to him vs the loyalty to the sacked committee members and other pastors

2. What was wrong with Mr Lee Cheow Hwa's actions in this debacle? What should Mr Lee Cheow Hwa have done in this circumstance?

Mr Lee let his personal loyalty to Rev Moses cloud his judgment in this crisis. Yes Rev Moses is a good man but even good men have weaknesses and clay feet and the job of fellow leaders is to protect Rev Moses from letting his weaknesses imperil the unity of the church. Fellow leaders like Mr Lee should act to help Rev Moses grow and learn to repent in crisis like this. They cannot assume that their main pastor is a man who is without flaws and give blind loyalty. In 1 Cor 1 Paul writes that he himself was not crucified for them and cannot have the absolute loyalty that is due only to Christ.

Mr Lee should get an opportunity to speak to the leaders who have been sacked to hear their side of the story. He should look to the facts of the matter to focus on the issues and never to make decisions based on personal loyalty. He should then vote according to his conscience after having prayed about it. There is a reason Baptist churches place a 75% vote for the pastors as it is about spiritual leadership which cannot be practiced if there is no significant mandate

3. What can the leaders do?

The leaders on both sides of the fence should start to focus on the issues not on the person they are loyal to or they dislike in the case of the opposition. They should try to objectively review the pastors tenure with the church and they have already lost half the congregation who have voted with their feet and this alone should tell us that there is something

intrinsically wrong with his leadership notwithstanding his bible knowledge or gifts. They should come to some sort of compromise, may he can remain as one of the pastors in teaching or other ministry but not as the main pastor of the whole church as he has lost too much credibility for that position to be tenable. Another lay leader can come into the fore and restore confidence and heal wounds. If the pastor cannot accept such a situation the leadership should withdraw support otherwise it goes to a bruising election where one side will be hurt and the church split. Prayerful compromise should be the order of the day.

Appendix 1

Voice of America

Pope John Paul II to Become Saint After Miracle Approved

Henry Ridgwell

July 05, 2013

LONDON — The Vatican has announced that the late Pope John Paul II will be made a saint, after Pope Francis approved a second miracle attributed to the Polish pontiff. John Paul II led the Roman Catholic Church from 1978 to 2005.



It was in the small Costa Rican town of La Union de Tres Rios where the Vatican says Pope John Paul II performed his second miracle since his death - the criteria required for sainthood.

Costa Rica's Floribeth Mora looks at a bust of Pope John Paul II while giving her

account of a miracle attributed to John Paul, during a press conference at the Archbishop's office in San Jose, Costa Rica, July 5, 2013.

The late pontiff was credited with curing Floribeth Mora, a woman from the town who had a severe brain injury. Her family prayed to the pope's memory and says she was cured on May 1, 2011.

John Paul had already been credited with healing a French nun of Parkinson's disease.

At London's Westminster Cathedral, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor gave his reaction.

How to Become a Saint in the Catholic Church:

- Candidates for sainthood undergo an investigation
- Inquiries are made into the person's life, reputation, and activities during their lifetime
- Proof that no one has proclaimed or is already proclaiming and honoring the person as a saint before its been officially declared
- An exhaustive examination of the person's written and spoken (transcripts) works
- If investigators declare the candidate venerable, evidence of miracles attributed to the candidate's intercession with God is sought
- Miracles need to be documented and authenticated
- Actual ceremony usually takes place in St. Peter's Square outside the Vatican

Appendix 2

Blaise Pascal



The year of grace 1654 Monday, 23 November, feast of Saint Clement, Pope and Martyr, and of others in the Martyrology.
Eve of Saint Chrysogonus, Martyr and others.
From about half past ten in the evening until half past midnight

Fire

'God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob,' not of philosophers and scholars. God of Jesus Christ.

Certainty, certainty, heartfelt, joy, peace.

God of Jesus Christ.

My God and your God.

'Thy God shall be my God.'

The world forgotten, and everything except God.

He can only be found by the ways taught in the Gospels.

Greatness of the human soul.

'O righteous Father, the world had not known thee, but I have known thee.'

Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy.

I have cut myself off from him.

They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters.

'My God wilt thou forsake me?'

Let me not be cut off from him for ever!

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.'

Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ.

I have cut myself off from him, shunned him, denied him, crucified him.

Let me never be cut off from him!

He can only be kept by the ways taught in the Gospel.

Sweet and total renunciation.

Total submission to Jesus Christ and my director.

Everlasting joy in return for one day's effort on earth.

I will not forget thy word. Amen.

Posted by Pascalian Awakenings

Shift from Empty Cheques of Fake Love

12 Sept 2013 by Natasha Kim CM-



The testimony of Michael Lee of FGB who life came tumbling down financially and he had nowhere to turn to

One day, in his despair and sudden search for something more in life, he turned the Bible in his room, which his brother Reggie gave to him. The following verse stood out to him: -

Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in obedience to him. You will eat the fruit of your labour; blessings and prosperity will be yours. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table. Yes, this will be the blessing for the man who fears the Lord. May the Lord bless you from Zion; may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life. May you live to see your children's children. Ps 128

With nothing else to lose he said, "If you are the one true God, I surrender my life to you and let's see how you take my life. That was the best day of my life!" God started to transform Michael's heart as he entered into a relationship with Him and walked with Him.

Buying a House

When he came to know the Lord, Michael did not own a house but he was staying in a friend's house for free. He was utterly thankful for that. When he bumped into a friend who managed a computer class, she found out that he did not own a house and gave him a long lecture. All Michael said to her was, "Never mind, you know our God is great, if He wants to buy me a house, He'll buy me a house." With that, she brushed him off and went away. In reality, buying a house was unthinkable because he had tons of debts to pay.

Two weeks later, a man in church walked up to him and asked him if he wanted to purchase his house as he was looking for a buyer. Michael jokingly replied saying, "Yeah sure why not?" A week after that, the man approached him again about the topic and of course Michael explained that he was joking and panicked. This man, to his surprise said, "No worries, you get your lawyer and I will sign the agreement. Go to the bank and get a loan and whatever the bank gives you I will take it and give me the balance when you have money," he said. That itself was a miracle, he thought and agreed to it.

He then prayed to God and asked God which lawyer he should go to, a Christian one that he had in mind or another one who worked close by. "The Lord said "No" to both. Then, he thought of a non-Christian lawyer who was a well-known trickster and the Lord said "Yes". Hence, Michael just obeyed.

After everything was done and the lawyer's bill came, his jaw dropped; the man who was selling his house on the other hand was cool and composed. Michael thought, "Wow, this guy really had super faith!" When the lawyer found out that Michael was working in the security line, his eyes glimmered as he was looking for someone to do some security work in a huge bungalow. Michael

then got the job and his lawyer fee was settled from there! He was so amazed! Finally, he understood why God wanted him to hire this lawyer instead of other lawyers. Because of his faith and obedience to God, many miracles began to take place; he got his house, his security business prospered and his relationship with his wife could not better! "If you are faithful to God, the Bible says, 'You will reap the good of the land!'" he shared. In this journey of life and after all he has gone through, he now knows that God can make things happen even when things may seem impossible. "He is God, don't play-play!" he said before he came to a close. Many went home inspired and encouraged.

- See more at: <http://christianitymalaysia.com/wp/shift-empty-cheques-fake-love/#sthash.SSPGOQOI.dpuf>