

LOVE MANAGEMENT: A PARADIGM SHIFT FROM A HEART IN HELL TO A HEART IN HEAVEN

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INTRODUCTION

Ignorance, disease, undernourishment, political and economic subjugation are still the most powerful forces stunting individual growth. But it is interesting to note that an essential feature of the individual's predicament today is that there is no villain. What is pressing the individual is the very nature of modern society.

John W. Gardner says that men in the grimmest moments of modern industrialism are no more miserable than the Egyptian slaves who built the pyramids. It is neither science nor advanced technology that causes the trouble. The root of the difficulty is an attitude of mind that has never really died out in the world, nor perhaps even diminished greatly since the days of the Pharaohs—a willingness to sacrifice human values to other objectives.

He further claims that life is harsh, and it has always been harsh. The only sensible view of life is, and has always been, based on a clear-eyed recognition—not necessarily acceptance—of the elements of tragedy, irony and absurdity in life.

What do we do then to cope with life? Let me toy with the concept of love, which is the cause and the solution of our individual predicament, our communities and society as a whole.

Allow me to start with songs. Love, it has been said, is the universal language. It is extolled everywhere, by everyone as the pinnacle of virtue. "What the world needs now," Dionne Warwick sang, "is love, sweet love." The Beatles claimed, "all you need is love." Michael Bolton contended, "Love is a wonderful thing." It is, of course, a wonderful thing. There is even the song that

hums, "Love is a many splendored thing." But why? Why is love a virtue?

THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

Two thousand years ago, Jesus was asked which is the greatest commandment in the Law. "Love the Lord your God," Jesus answered, "with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

The greatest precept in the Law, according to Jesus, is the command to love. He even went so far as to say, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven."

The precept is clear: love—for God, for our spouses, for our neighbors, even for our enemies—is commanded. "This is the message we have heard from the beginning," according to the apostle John. "We should love one another."

However from time immemorial, people have not fully understood that what we love is what poisons or heals us?

THE POISONOUS LOVES

Let me first enumerate the loves that poison us:

We love to love our self. We love to criticize others. We love to be selfish. We love to hate those we don't like. We love to get irritated and angry when things go wrong. We love to be jealous. We love to take sweet revenge. We love to fear and worry, even thought we think we don't. Some of us even love to lie, steal, cheat and be cruel.

We love to get it out of our system by cursing. We love to pity ourselves and groan over how badly we are treated. We love to waste time in empty talk and gossip. We love awful news and murder stories.

We love bad thoughts, gloomy thoughts and filthy yarns. We love to make our iron will drive everything before us. We love intemperate use of alcohol, nicotine. We love adultery, lust after women. . .and lust after men.

We love to be vain, proud. We love to believe ourselves so smart

we don't need God. We love self-admiration, flattery. We love ease. We love to be greedy for our brother's property. We love fame, money and power.

The foregoing are the loves that poison us. I believe I have not listed all. You may add some more of your own. We know they poison us because of the hurt they leave in our hearts. For example: Hate makes an awful hurt in our heart. So does anger, jealousy, criticism, revenge. All these deadly loves leave a hurt in our heart.

THE DIVINE LOVE

Divine Love was a stranger to mankind in the year A.D. 1. So God had Himself born into the fleshly body of Jesus. By thus being one of us in the flesh He hoped to teach us Divine Love. He hoped to show us the Divine Love that never loves our self but only the Lord Jesus (God) and the good in our brothers. The Love which never criticizes but forgives.

The Love that never loves to be selfish but loves only to do good to others. The Love which never hates but loves those "who despitefully use us and persecute us." The Love that "walks beside still water"—never irritated nor angry. The Love that's never jealous but rejoices in our brother's good fortune.

The Love that sees no sweetness in revenge but loves and forgives those who harm us. The Love which hides in the lovely heart of Jesus where fear and worry are unknown. The Love that feels like vomiting at the very thought of lying, stealing, cheating, and cruelty. The Love that sings praises to God instead of cursing. The Love which never pities self but glories in pain that burns the poisons out of us.

The Love that sickens at awful news and murder stories. The Love which knows no gloom but leaps with angelic joy. The Love which obeys no will but the tender will of our Lord Jesus (God). The Love that sickens at adultery, lust after women, lust after men and intemperate use of alcohol and nicotine.

The Love so meek and lowly that vanity cannot breathe in it. The Love that leans on our Lord Jesus—never on self. The Love that shuns ease and works always to help others—not for reward but just because it loves everybody. The Love that never covets or wants fame, money, power. For it knows that all property and power belong to our Lord Jesus (God).

We can fill ourselves with Divine Love by trying to forsake the loves that poison us. (Your list and those I have enumerated.) And instead, try to love ONLY our Lord Jesus (Love) and the good in our brothers.

HOPES AND DREAMS

Life is too dear merely to survive in it. The hopes and dreams born within the human heart are too precious to be squandered. The only thing that really matters is people, our attachment to them, our love for them.

And let us always remember that we cannot change from infernal love to Divine Love all by ourselves. We need the help of our Lord Jesus to make a shift from a heart in hell to a heart in heaven.

Our world is of massive violence, inequity of wealth, over-consumption of resources, and environmental abuse. The tensions we live within come from the fact that while we have used our abilities to construct a world of technological achievement and mastery, we have lost sight of our need for the spiritual resources to live in it humanely and justly.

POLITICS AND ECONOMICS

We often have the feeling that if we could just get the political scene right then our troubles would disappear. And also the other false *god* which promises solution—the economy. If we could only get that straight then we would live in peace and prosperity.

But again, the problem is neither politics nor economics—it lies in the heart of humanity. There is a deep flaw within all human beings. We are extremely talented, yet we are very restless. We can aspire to the heights of Heaven, yet we cause utter hell to ourselves and others. We can do the most noble of deeds and yet also the most foul.

THE SUPREMACY OF RELIGION

Modern education does not recognize the supremacy of religion and it seeks to divorce religion from life. Education today seems to consider everything that brings comfort and prosperity in this world as conducive to happiness. It is solely preoccupied with achieving worldly happiness by utilizing any means available.

People have very little faith in religion because today there is only talk. Most of what we call religion is simply management not vision. It is based on selfish motives. What is the essence of religion? Truthfulness, love, faith in God, and service to everyone.

As each day brings more news of wars and revolts, corruption and drugs, terrorism and hostages, repression and torture, we may become discouraged and come to feel that humanity is beyond redemption.

The world is in agony now and it is often difficult to believe that it can be saved at all. But all it takes is a shift of consciousness. A new worldview would create a new reality. How about a shift from a heart in hell to a heart in heaven? Transformation is possible. Teach everyone Love Management not just management.

CONCLUSION

One author has said, "To be a writer does not mean to preach a truth, it means to discover a truth." This piece is not intended just to convince, it is also an attempt to discover the meaning of Love Management.

How tangled our problems are as the days pass, and no way appears by which the matter may be straightened out. Perhaps we have been keeping the problem too much in our hands. Let us stop and talk a while and ponder, "the greatest forces in nature are quiet ones." Life being a series of problems and solutions, we cannot survive without drawing from our inner resources. Everything that limits us we have to put aside. Paradigm shift, anyone?

Let me conclude, lest we forget that historical awareness tells us that underlying whatever new designs may be created, there are social, political, cultural and economic forces at work and institutional and attitudinal features which limit how much can be achieved.

However, if only we learn Love Management that is business education where religion is supreme. We might change individually for the better and society as a whole for the better.

It is probably fitting that I end with a prayer by Michael Leunig, an Australian cartoonist. It goes this way:

God help us to change.
To change ourselves;
To change our world;
To know the need for it.
To deal with the pain of it;
To undertake the journey without understanding the destination,
The art of gentle revolution.

Amen.

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