



NEW BEGINNINGS CHRISTIAN CHURCH GOLD COAST, QUEENSLAND

QUALIFIED FOR EVERY BLESSING BECAUSE
OF THE FINISHED WORK OF JESUS

WE ARE CRAFTED : NOT CLONED

One of the many wonders of God's grace is that we are His workmanship (see Eph.2:10).

The Greek word for 'workmanship' is *ispoema*, meaning 'to make'. We get the word 'poem' from this word. We are God's work of art, His masterpiece. Just as no two blades of grass or two snowflakes are the same, so in the new creation we have been individually and skilfully planned and crafted. And it takes every individual member of the body of Christ to display the full glory of His handiwork.

Any attempt to clone God's people will hinder the revelation of this glory. Cloning seeks to produce multiple identical copies from an original model. Its purpose is to ensure that every part of the DNA of the original is passed on, resulting in exact reproductions.

Spiritual cloning militates against divine crafting

1. It destroys creativity. With cloning everyone ends up as replicas of the original version. They talk, behave, minister and sometimes even dress like their prototype. Monkey see, monkey do. God didn't make you to be a carbon copy of someone else. He created you as a unique individual because He wants to express something special through you. When God made Charles Spurgeon He destroyed the mould. When He made Smith-Wigglesworth He threw away the blueprint. He doesn't want a Church full of 'look-alikes'. His creative power is infinite and He desires to express through you something unlike anything else, the only one of a kind. Trying to be like others stifles creativity.

2. It tends towards co-dependency. In a subtle way the original model replaces Christ as the life-source. With cloning, ministry is usually one-way traffic. The original copy ministers downwards to a multitude of reproductions of himself or herself. The copies look to the original for direction and instructions. But Christ leads by His Spirit and pours His life through the whole body. This life passes from member to member – not in one direction but as two-way traffic. Recently a friend was sharing how his colleague had been so blessed by a particular ministry that he tended to feed exclusively upon this person's teaching. He had an iPod full of his sermons. Then he lost the iPod. And he felt the Lord say to him, 'Let it go. It's time now to open your heart to what I want to say to you through others.' Many of us are thankful to God for certain individuals whom He has used to bless and help shape our lives. But He never intends for us to depend exclusively upon them. Paul prayed that we 'may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height' of God's love (Ephesians 3:18 NKJV).

3. It rejects anything that is different. Since the goal of cloning is conformity it often leads to separation and isolation from anything that is different. The message is 'Don't read, listen to or watch anyone who is different to us.' Cloning occurred in the church at Corinth. Some were saying, 'I am of Paul' others, 'I am of Peter' and others, 'I am of Apollos'. Because individuals had been so blessed by a particular leader they camped around their ministry, forming cliques. They separated from others and even became hostile towards them. The same spirit is sometimes seen today on Christian social media and internet blogs.

Paul was horrified that his name was used in this way and that he was regarded by some as a kind of guru. For this reason he was glad he had not baptised many of them lest they should regard their baptism as superior to others.

Then he points out how ironic it is that the carnal Corinthians boasted in their cliques when in fact they were impoverished by them. He asks why they were choosing one leader against another when all leaders been given to them by God. 'Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours' (1 Cor.3:21-22 NKJV). Why have only Paul, when we can have Peter and Apollos as well? Who said we had to choose one against another? God may use Paul to plant, Apollos to water and Peter to tend. Let's benefit from the richness of all who are a part of Christ's body. We can have diversity without division and unity without uniformity.

Don't be a copy – be an original version!

Peter describes the rich variegation within the Church as the 'manifold grace of God' (1 Peter 4:10 NKJV). The word translated as 'manifold' means multifaceted or many-sided. The Church is like a gem held in the hand of God. As it is turned it glistens, sparkles and gleams as its many facets send forth shafts of light. May the special, particular beauty which Christ has imparted to you come forth in all its glory through your individual uniqueness. Don't be a carbon copy of someone else. Be the original version of Christ in you!

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