

Christian Perspectives: What are you communicating to others

In his book, *Zen In The Marital Arts*, Joe Hyams tells the story about two martial artists who had been friends. One was an instructor and his friend, who chose to open his own dojo. In the process, the friend took several students with him from the instructor's dojo. These individuals became irrationally hostile and confrontational towards each other. Joe Hyams writes, "They displayed all the behaviour one might expect of misbehaved children, indicating to me that it is possible to be a martial arts master without mastering the spirit of Zen."

I would suggest the same is true within the church. There are many people who have mastered the intellectual aspects of God's Word, they have memorized the catechisms of their religion and can even spit out the appropriate lingo, but in the course of the living of their lives, they have not mastered the Spirit of Christ.

Too often it takes very little for there to be a squabble in the ranks of the "faithful," with hurt feelings and bitterness being expressed. Then the proclamation is expressed, "If that is what a "Christian" is like, I want nothing to do with it." Each person goes off in a huff and diminishes themselves in the process

The reality is, this is not an isolated event or practice. It happens in clubs and organizations of all types and sizes. It really has everything to do with the mindset and attitudes with which people live. It is an inner process which is in need of transformation. Only when that occurs will you find enhancement in the outer expressions of how life is lived in relationship to both God and others. The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:2-3 these words, "With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bear with one another in love, {3} making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

How we respond to others is a clear statement of our expression of love. 1 Corinthians 13-4-8 reminds us, "Love is patient, love is kind, it is not envious. Love does not brag, it is not puffed up. {5} It is not rude, it is not self-serving, it is not easily angered or resentful. {6} It is not glad about injustice, but rejoices in the truth. {7} It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends."

What does your life say about your mastery of the spirit of your faith?

Rev. Bob McLellan

Grace Church of the Nazarene, Shelburne, ON