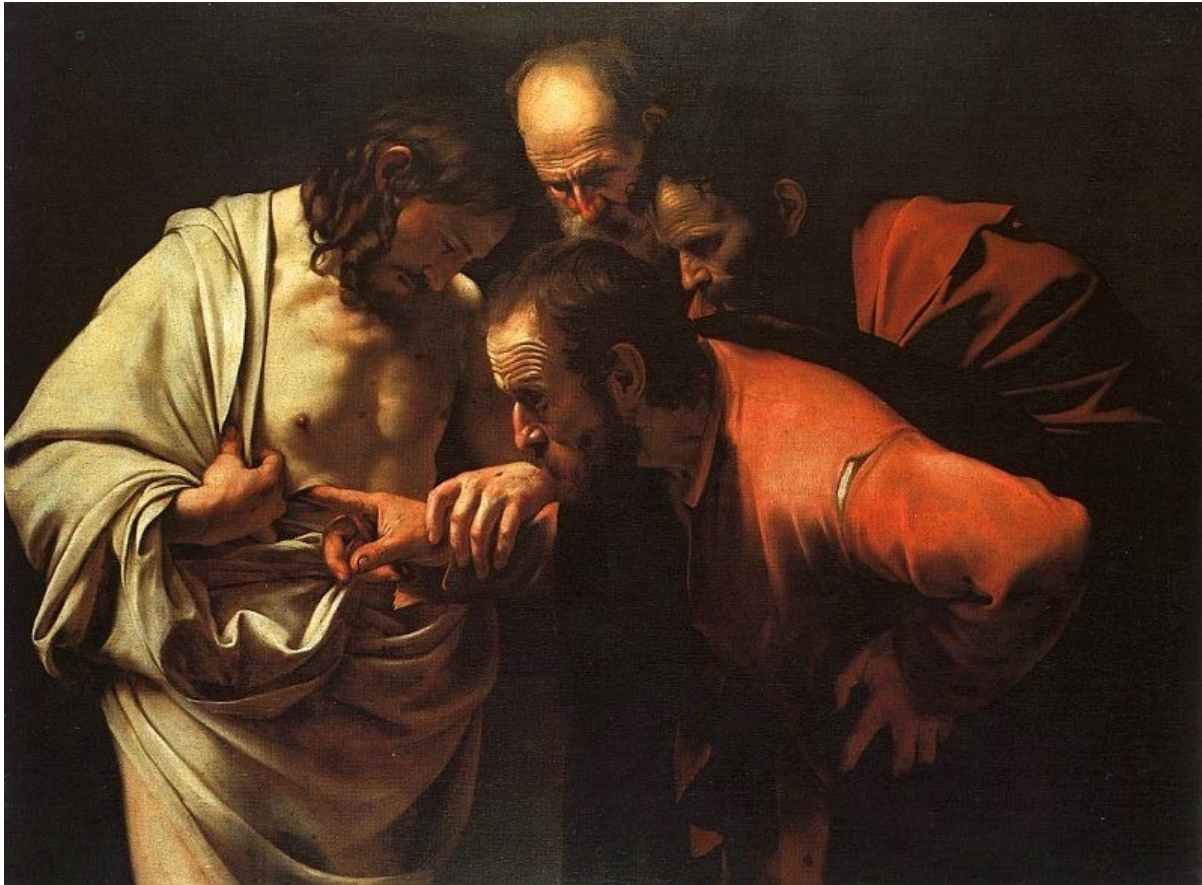


The Curse of the Genetic Fallacy and Bad Theology

By Kenneth Francis (June 2018)



Doubting Thomas, Caravaggio, 1601-1602

If you want to see a good example of bad Christian theology today, then look no further than any of the Emerging Churches worldwide. These churches are “fluid” in their teachings (“Fluid” usually means that the moral truths of Scripture have evolved to keep in line with human happiness and if you don’t go along with it, you are a mean, intolerant bigot).

Christian apologist Bill Muehlenberg has this to say about what he pejoratively calls, the “submergent church”: “Error

leads to error. Rebellion leads to rebellion. Heresy leads to heresy. Apostasy leads to apostasy. That is how things usually go when deception is allowed to take a foothold in the Christian camp. And we see all this perfectly reflected in what is known as the Emergent Church.”

He says that this progressive, trendy movement within Christianity takes pride in being cutting edge, with-it, and cool. But it is achieving this mainly at the expense of biblical orthodoxy. “Indeed, it prides itself in decrying and dismissing the importance of truth, of doctrine, and of orthodoxy. It foolishly thinks that if it jettisons the old biblical verities, and experiments with the new, the radical, and the hip, it will somehow bring in the masses and reinvigorate Christianity. Well, it may attract the masses, but it is not attracting them to biblical Christianity,” he adds.

And there are also other examples of bad theology, particularly in America, where thousands of worshipers cheer-on wealthy preachers in mega-stadiums, complete with bands, rock music and dancing (not to be confused with conservative evangelical events expressed by apologetics, which are philosophically, theologically and scientifically sophisticated and strive for theistic truthful revelation, as opposed to pragmatic, happy-clappy fulfilment).

Then there is the bad theology espoused in many Catholic churches in recent years, where there is a watered-down, politically correct version of what Jesus taught in the gospels. In such churches, Hell is rarely mentioned and Jesus is portrayed as an inoffensive character focused only on love and forgiveness; a kind of frothy latte hipster with socialist

leanings.

Many sophisticated Catholics blame Vatican 2 for this but the presence of bad theology actually accelerated in the 18th century after the so-called "Enlightenment" (it really started at the foot of the Cross but became wide-spread over 300 years ago). During that time to the present day, there has been a spiritual war in the Church by both anti-Christian infiltrators/counterfeit clergy and genuine followers of Christ. Jesus warned us: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ', and will deceive many" (Matthew 24:4-5).

It's quite common to hear anti-Christians, who've been marinated in bad theology, say the Church is corrupt and guilty of terrible abuses. It's true that there were (and still are) evildoers in the Church and much abuse took place in it; but these rogues who carried it out, and still do, were not faithful to the Magisterium, which cannot abuse its followers. Take for example the genetic fallacy. This is an illogical argument based on the origin of an idea and a bias for those who support the argument.

An example of a genetic fallacy is the statement, "2 + 2 cannot equal 4 because my maths teacher, who used to abuse me, told me it to be true." The maths teacher may have been a horrible person, but it doesn't necessarily follow that his equations don't make sense because of the hurt he once caused to a past-pupil. Evil monsters can sometimes be right; also, maths cannot physically or mentally abuse anyone.

Another example of a genetic fallacy is to say the Earth can't be round because "I once read about it being a sphere in a child's comic book". Usually those who commit the genetic fallacy have come to the conclusion based on the source or background knowledge of thing, but not on anything positive about it, as well as the rational/logical meaning of such things.

But nowhere is the genetic fallacy more destructive or toxic than when regarding arguments about religion, thus leading to bad theology. Let's assume a person grew up in a Catholic country. Should his or her faith be irrelevant because that person more than likely learned that faith from parents, friends and general culture? But what about all the famous atheists who grew up in Christian cultures; why aren't they religious?

But back to bad theology. Ever since the Reformation, Enlightenment, and subsequent Vatican 2, the Church has had a lot more than its fair share of heretics, charlatans, crackpots, degenerate, immoral, fake clergy, as well as saintly, scholarly, genuine heroes and devout martyrs. But don't take my word for the above undesirables thus mentioned, as Jesus warned us about wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15). However, ignorance still prevails. It's understandable that many ordinary atheists and Christians have an unsophisticated view of theology, philosophy, cosmos, science and consciousness. It would not be the first time that it has been stated that we live in a world of dumbed-down education systems.

Perhaps it is less often stated that, coupled with this dumbing-down, we live in a media-inspired, feelings-culture.

This combination of dumbing-down and feelings-culture has led to the gradual closing of the mind in the 21st century. Furthermore, many atheists think Christians are young-earth creationists who believe in God with a blind faith. This is untrue. Although there are a lot of Christians who have a properly basic view of the Bible, and some who believe in a young earth, it is also necessary to hold intellectual arguments as to why Christianity is true. Believing with both the heart and mind is a prerequisite to achieving a sophisticated view of who God is. And God expects this from us.

St Augustine of Hippo said: 'If you believe what you like in the Gospel, and reject what you don't like, it is not the Gospel you believe in, but yourself.'

Everyone who thinks about the existence or non-existence of God has a theology, which is either their own or what Scripture states. Here are a few questions to ponder on how one perceives theology:

- Do we believe it is based purely on Scripture?
- Is it a belief that science and God are incompatible?
- Is it a belief that God does not exist and life should be lived for the moment?
- Is it a belief that God keeps Himself at a distance, except in the case of an emergency when you need Him; a kind of cosmic PA?
- According to the Bible, the Real God of Christianity forbids us to break the rules laid out in Scripture. But is that mean and unfair, as it gets in the way of a shopping list of our worldly, guilty pleasures?

Do you find the following things get in the way of belief in God: pre-marital sex, promiscuity, unrestrained sexual behaviour, habitual drunkenness, deception and a wide range of immoral earthly human desires?

And for those who were once Christian and lost their faith, consider the following questions:

- Did you want to lead an immoral life but God got in the way? did you want moral autonomy?
- Was the pursuit of happiness, at any cost, your ultimate goal in life? And was it because when you prayed to God, He did not grant you happiness so you lost your faith?
- Or was it because it was not cool to believe in the God of Christianity and you became unpopular with your peers by believing in Him? Or that by believing in exclusive truth, people were offended and ridiculed you for not being 'tolerant', 'open-minded' and 'inclusive'? Did the idea of Sin and Hell put you off believing?

These are just some of the many questions for those who have lost their faith. But for those who still believe in the God of Christianity, but have selected only the parts of Scripture that fit in with their worldview, they should also consider the following questions: Is it happiness or Truth that you want? Or:

- Did the other religions in the world make you feel it was arrogant to believe Christianity is the one true religion?

- Did apathy force you to abandon logic and instead be guided by your feelings?
- Did certain 'unpleasant' moral obligations in Christianity make you feel bad because you could not live up to them?
- And if something gets in the way of your happiness, does that automatically mean it is untrue?
- Does everything in the Bible have to feel good in order to be true? In other words, if God's rules do not live up to one's expectations, can they be true?
- But didn't Jesus tell us many things that we did not want to hear but needed to hear?

All of these questions leave us with the Ultimate Question: What is the central message in the Bible, the one that comes before all the rest? For this, we must look at the Gospel of John and briefly interpret its meaning.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men: and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

What the 'Word' seems to mean here is Logic, Reason, God: The universe complete with a Moral Order. In other words, we have to ask does Logic (*logos*), although it has other meanings, come before Love? Jesus was (is) Logos incarnate in part human, part divine form. He was also not noted for his loving tolerance when He addressed sinners, or when he stormed the

Temple with a whip, overturned the tables and used physical force on the money changers. Not to be angry at the greedy nature of the money changers in a sacred place would be an imperfection of character. Should a parent feel anger if one of her children is attacked for no reason by another child? Should they feel anger if their child is being abused by an adult? The bad theology that says Jesus was imperfect in the case of the Temple storming is way off the mark. And the same applies to the Fig Tree incident. In Matthew 21:18-22:

Early in the morning, as He was on his way back to the city, He was hungry. Seeing a fig tree by the road, He went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then He said to it, 'May you never bear fruit again!' Immediately the tree withered. When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. 'How did the fig tree wither so quickly?' they asked. Jesus replied, 'I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.'

The question here is: Is it right to be angry at a deception? Of course it is, even for a Perfect Being. The tree can also be seen as a symbol of a wolf in sheep's clothing. It also has echoes of Matthew 21:18-22 and Mark 11:12-14. Symbolically, this tree stood for the spiritual bankruptcy of Israel during the time of Our Lord, where religiously many, not all, appeared upright outwardly, while inwardly hypocrisy and sinfulness lurked slyly in the depths of their hearts and souls. And this is the point: Christianity was and still is

being infiltrated by many wolves in sheep's clothing deceiving the flock.

In some churches, the secular media, corporate workplaces and academia, political correctness rules with an iron fist and treats anyone who does not adhere to it as an outcast or pariah. Although there are some fine universities in the West, unfortunately many, instead of teaching relevant issues such as reading, writing, arithmetic, orthodox Christian theology, history and how our future will be shaped, students are indoctrinated with pro-secularist humanist views and bad theology.

The stranglehold of PC and anti-Christian agendas is turning many university campuses into what writer Mark Steyn has described as 'decay into ideological factory farms'. The Bible warns us in Isaiah 5:20: 'Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!'

And in the Parable of the Madman, Nietzsche sums up how the death of God leaves us rudderless in a topsy-turvy sea of meaningless babble. The Madman says: '. . . We have killed Him [God]—you and I. All of us are his murderers. But how did we do this? How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun? . . . God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed Him . . .'

If Nietzsche claimed we killed Christianity at the turn of the

20th century, then today, is the feel-good, counterfeit Emergent Church and bad theology putting the final nail into God's coffin in the 21st century? But not all churches are submerging. The legacy of bad theology will have to be reversed and Real Christianity restored by devout Christians working hard for its revival.

However, if you reject Christianity and are not open-minded to it being the Truth, then the last paragraph will be a waste of time reading:

As alienated sinners, God clearly spells out the ultimate meaning of our lives: we must try to get to know Him through Christ, have our theology through Christ, enter into a union with God, and try our best to live by the Word of the Bible in order to be saved and enter Heaven. Those who are not saved are not sent to Hell by God. Because they reject God, through the gift of free will, they send themselves there; eternally separated from the Creator of the universe.

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