

Lessons from Process and Change Management

To the brother who suggested changing all the leaders for younger ones:

One aspect of the time element associated with changes to processes and organizations is that there are changes that start as interrelated but after a period of time become independent of each other. At that point, the changes become irreversible.

This is one of those. The leadership and the problems started out interrelated but it has gone so far that they are now independent of each other. Changing the whole leadership will not make the problems we now have go away.

While changing the whole leadership may have a certain charm to it - as in signaling a new beginning, a "going back to basics" kind of process or a "true restoration" - I believe the time elapsed has been too long for this to be effective. Sides have polarized, both organizations have changed and continue to evolve and issues have migrated to the legal plane. These have made the changes irreversible. Restoration implies reversing all that has happened. This, I'm afraid, not possible anymore.

As one would-be philosopher said: Murphy's law is recursive and it doesn't work in reverse. Washing your car to make it rain does not work.

I think it's better to ask how it was possible for such leaders to behave the way they did. The root cause may not be the person but that person's spiritual maturity and his capability and willingness to put it into practice.

So here are a couple of ideas that, I believe, may work:

1. An honest assessment of our, as Tito Joe calls it, State of the Mission, at the grassroots level. I do not mean the 160-countries-almost-a-million-members state of the mission. The state of the mission that is more important is the "how far are the members in walking the talk" kind. Sort of like asking the question: "on a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being highest, where would we all be, all 800,000 of us, in walking the talk?"

Over 25 years ago, one of the competitive advantages that McKinsey & Co generated for itself came from a thorough assessment of its business. They concluded that, fundamentally, at the grassroots level, as management consultants they dealt largely with information, knowledge and continuous learning. They started a knowledge management program way before any competitor. Almost overnight each McKinsey consultant had access to knowledge gained by other colleagues in other projects. Until today, this is one of the reasons why McKinsey is a leader in their business. (see Harvard Business School case study 9-396-357)

We need to do something similar. The pastoral congress was a very good start. Not only in terms of the leadership knowing what we thought but in terms of building communication links between leadership and members. We must find innovative ways to continually enhance the learning of each member. Too often, binibitawan natin ang ating mga kapatid once naka-attend na sila ng formation talks. Minsan meron tayong attitude na "we will feed you the talks but you have to be responsible for developing your own spiritual maturity."

Across the board we all have differing levels of spiritual maturity, which, to me begs the question: "what are we doing to guide the others?" Those who have reached a higher spiritual maturity should pass on their knowledge to others.

This is now happening to a degree - new talks, in sharings, assemblies and conferences. But too often these are delivered in an "if-God-can-bless-me-this-way-He-can-do-it-to-you-too" approach. What I was thinking of was more of the "how-I-did-it" approach - a sharing of methods, how-to's and attitudes.

Walking the talk is a multifaceted challenge. We have to achieve some mastery of all of them before we can claim to do it. You can't walk the talk during CLPs, household meetings and assemblies and then go and oppress your kapatid dahil lang ayaw niyang sumama sa FFL. Walking the talk cuts across all our modes and forms of behaviour, attitudes and thinking processes.

We need to assess the ways we pass on the knowledge of how to walk the talk. We expand and repeat those that work and throw away those that don't. We also need to continuously innovate new ways to do this. For those on a "higher" plane it is a mentoring challenge. To all others this is a learning challenge. Some of us are senseis and shifus while many of us are still grasshoppers.

Mga kapatid, walking the talk is about mastery, no less. When the Lord said "follow me", I believe he did not only mean "walk behind me". I believe he also meant "think the way I do", "speak the way I do", "love the way I do"... Walking the talk is to think Jesus' thoughts, see what Jesus saw (in others and in the world), love the way He loved and do what Jesus did. That last part is especially exciting for me. To do what He did. His promise is incredible "he who believes in me, the works I do he will do, and greater works than these he will do..." (John 14:12) Can you imagine doing greater works? That one blows my mind.

Mastery requires training because practice makes perfect. The masters among us must not leave us groping around trying to find our own way. They can guide us, pass on to us their knowledge. Best of all, they can pass on to us how they did it, their methods, their attitudes, the processes they used in learning.

In Gawad Kalinga this is easily appreciated. Lessons learned from builds - in project management, construction techniques, CDP and KB for example - can increase the effectiveness and efficiency of subsequent builds. How good are we in doing this? The list of issues in Remarville published here implies that we may not be that good. Or is Remarville an exception? Or was it just Murphy's law letting one slip through the cracks?

2. Live out the CFC Corporate culture and identity. Why do people stash their money in Switzerland? It's not because of the banking. You can do banking in any city in the world. It's because the Swiss have a culture and identity of being trustworthy and discrete. It's about secrecy. In the 70's when Kodak saw their market share start to slip, they re-invented themselves. Almost overnight it wasn't about Instamatic cameras and cartridge films anymore, it was suddenly about capturing memories. Even Hallmark Cards jumped in, reminding people that "no one throws away memories". By defining their culture and identity, they continued on their roads to success.

I have heard former CFC leaders tell members that CFC culture allows them to sing only the songs in the Glory books, even outside of household meetings. I said former because, thank God, they went to FFL. And that CFC Culture dictates that households have to be led by a couple and that leaders should exercise brotherly correction but only downwards because leaders, being anointed, should not be questioned. Sound familiar? I am not talking about that culture.

The culture and identity I am talking about is the real charism-driven, Spirit-centered CFC culture that continually asks "what would love do now?" Much like YFC's wearing WWJD bracelets (What Would Jesus Do). I am talking about a culture that defines our identity as Catholics who first see Christ in the other before anything else. I refer to a culture that pushes us to give our best to the Lord in everything we do. We have often been told to share our Time, Talent and Treasure. It is not so much the quantity but the quality that matters. I can share my talents with you every day of the week but if I don't give you the best performance I can give, it still may not give results. What I am talking about is the real CFC Culture and Identity that causes us to think twice or thrice before we decide to fail in walking the talk.

In GK, this, again, becomes almost obvious. TM tells everyone to be excellent always. I couldn't agree more. No one wants to build a house that will last only for a few months. I had a client once, a personnel manager,

who said that he is really good in differentiating between an applicant with 10 years' experience from another with 1 year's experience repeated 10 times. Quality counts. Fast tracking people is not it. Paying lip service to talks and even Catholic teaching is not it.

The real CFC culture and identity is one that results from a sincere personal transformation caused by love, an internal realization and acceptance of Christ's redemption, an outpouring of love for another because of a deeply felt clear awakening to the fact that God does love us. It is a culture that forgives easily yet does not deny the other the benefit of brotherly correction. It is a culture of true humility, a culture of hope, faith and love. It is a culture that suffers much and endures much but it also rejoices in God's triumph. It is a culture of joy, greeting each day in gladness like David who said "this is the day that the Lord has made, I will rejoice and be glad in it." It is a culture of strength, not weakness, of abundance not lack, of healing not sickness, of community not division, and of peace not strife. It is a culture of justice and mercy, a culture of obedience to the Spirit, a culture that places Jesus way above any other consideration we can think of. Our culture and identity gives primacy to God. It is a culture and identity wherein we can do nothing but walk the talk. It is a culture of mastery.

3. Monitor Results, they indicate success. Walking the talk is a process and a result. It is a way of life that results in itself. The more you practice it, the better you become at it and the more you have of it. Walking the talk is a process of daily transformation of love. By practicing the Love inside us, we become love. By practicing the wisdom that God gave us, we transform ourselves and others as well. We become more of who we really are.

We all grew up taught that we were created in the image of God. Well, God is love. So we are all images of love. That, mga kapatid, is our essence. That is our true self. An apple tree cannot bear oranges. It can only bear apples. It can only bring forth more of itself. As God is love and we are his children, we must be made of the stuff called love. In essence, we are love, each of us.

That is why we feel bad every time we do non-loving things - because they violate who we are. Every time we do something not of love, we reap guilt and require forgiveness. In many cases we insist on doing it, dahil we think that what we gained more than compensates for the guilt we feel. Yet, deep down, we know that whatever we gained does not change the fact that we did something against love and therefore against our own selves and against the whole Sonship.

Walking the talk is allowing this love to overflow in whichever direction it wants to. That is why when we do something for a friend, we always try to do it the best way we can. Nothing is too good for our friends. This is GK in action.

GK is love in each of the workers overflowing.

Everytime love overflows, it produces results across many levels. Observe GK and you will see that in each GK worker the outpouring of love produces a spiritual joy that overwhelms his/her heart. A joy so deep that it washes away the weariness of the body (sa kakapintura't pagbubuhay ng hollow blocks). Look at the beneficiaries and see hope, joy, openness, love. On the material level you can see the results as well - beautiful villages ablaze in color, schools and clinics and playgrounds. The results are visible and felt in other levels as well - in human relations, in community relations, even criminality suffers a drought and peace reigns where war used to wage.

Virtue is its own reward. Practicing love gives you more of it. Walking the talk is practicing love. GK is one way to walk the talk. In CFC, this is our daily life. This is the mastery we seek.

And believe it or not, we will get results in many levels - from the spiritual to the material. Walking the talk is God's will being done on earth as it is in heaven. Walking the talk is seeking the kingdom...the results come when "all the rest are added".

So look to the results mga kapatid. If they are not coming, that tells us we have to correct. By our fruits we shall be known...

As CFC, the results we leave should be like...leaving people just that bit more peaceful, more tolerant, more loving and joyful each time we interact with them. People should feel inspired by us. People should feel uplifted and built up. People should feel gratefulness to God - as in people saying "thank God I met that CFC member" instead of saying "ang gulo nyo..." I'm sure you all know what the rest of this paragraph should be.

God bless everyone,

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