

Thus, the particle of viral christianity has on its surface, something that acts as a key, to open the heart of the persons it comes into contact with. Jesus said that the greatest commandment was to "love God with all your heart" and that the second commandment was similar - "to love your neighbor as yourself."

He also said in Luke 6:27 "Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you."

In John 13:35, Jesus declared, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

John 15:13, "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

In Romans 13:8, Paul said, "Owe no man any thing, but to **love** one another: for he that **loveth** another hath fulfilled the law."

And in Galatians 5:14 "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt **love** thy neighbour as thyself."

IT'S LOVE THAT CATCHES PEOPLE'S ATTENTION. IT'S LOVE THAT OPENS THE DOOR TO THEIR HEARTS, Paul said, "If I have not love, I'm nothing; I'm just making noise." I Corinthians 13.

John tells us, "we have love because God first loved us." I John 4:19

**5. The last layer is the "lipid bylayer."** The "skin" of the viral particle is the host's lipid bylayer which is the skin of all of our cells. All that we have talked about so far, the gag (the message), the pol (reverse transcriptase) that replicates the information within the cell; the env (envelope protein) that allows the virus to latch onto cells is all contained within the lipid bylayer - or the skin.

And so, the message of God that He wants a relationship with men, that He wants them to know Him personally and intimately, to fellowship and commune with men; the core structure of the image of Christ, His character and nature - His image; the replicative power of the Holy Spirit and the key of love is all wrapped up in human skin.

Imagine that: Something so valuable and so beautiful and so powerful wrapped up in us, in our community right here at Agape, Again, Paul said - *we have the*

*"treasures" contained in jars of clay (earthen vessels).* (2 Corinthians 4:7).

Jesus was the Word (message) of God incarnate (in flesh) and the Life of Christ is formed in us: "I am crucified with Christ, and yet I live; yet it is not I that liveth, but Christ who lives in me."

**Conclusion:** Let me conclude by taking this simple analogy one step further. The viruses that move through the body are amazingly effective. They did not graduate from a virus seminary or RNA School of Theology; they are not highly trained in virus evangelism and they don't carry little tracts entitled the "4 Spiritual Laws for Viruses".

They are what they are, they have a message, and they communicate that message with every cell with which they come into contact.

Also, the task is not accomplished in viral meeting halls. There are no viral seminars or conferences where they all gather together with viruses of like faith. They don't need a prophetic virus to prophecy over them, "Yea - goest thou to the liver and I will give thee great victory."

They just go! And where ever they go - they touch other cells and open the doorway of that cell and communicate the message they were sent to give. And whatever that message is - it will spread through a universe of cells like a wildfire and soon, there is no controlling its spread until it runs its course.

And "viral believers" do not need theological degrees, or great charismatic personalities. We just need to be what we are, just GO! Touching lives with the love of Christ, and that love opens the hardened, rusted doors of broken lives and they bring the message that God loves you and he wants a relationship with you, and He can and will change you.

# AGAPE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP PULPIT SERIES

May 31, 2009

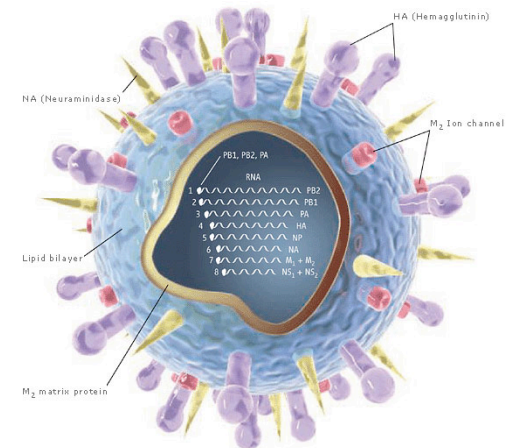


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## Viral Christianity

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Going Around the World for Jesus

A few weeks ago, there was a phenomenon in the computer world. Susan Boyle, a frumpy 47 year old, old maid from Britan got the chance to be a contestant on the Popular British Television show, "Britan's Got Talent". The cynical judges, as well as the audience, took one look at her and you could see on their faces what was in their minds, "You've GOT to be kidding!" What is this woman doing here and why does she think she can win a contest like this? But when the music began and Susan Boyle started to sing, she shook the entertainment world. She has a voice such as has not been heard in a long, long time and in a matter of 3 minutes and 46 seconds, she gripped the heart of everyone watching. Then in the matter of a few hours, the video of her performance showed up on YouTube and to date has been clicked on and viewed over 500 million times.

In computer language, the Susan Boyle video went "viral". One person heard it and told all of their friends, who also watched it and told all of their friends - in a matter of hours it had been viewed by over 200 million people.

Recently, we had (and many are still greatly concerned) an outbreak of the swine flu. One little boy in Mexico first developed the strain of influenza that had mutated from pigs to a strain that affects humans. There were fears of a global pandemic and dire warnings of what would happen if the virus went unchecked.

I come to you today to suggest one simple position. IF WE ARE GOING TO FULFILL THE GREAT COMMISSION - the church needs to do business differently than we have in this modern generation. We need to learn something from a simple organism called a virus. We need to see how its constructed, how it operates, and how it is so incredibly effective in what it does. In short, it's time that our faith went viral.

## 5 Components to a virus

1. **RNA - RNA is the message.** The very core of the virus. No RNA, not nothing. Contained in the single strand of RNA (Riboneucleic Acid) are millions and millions of pieces of information that tell the cells of a body what to do, what to look like, how to act, how to respond. RNA is the message and the virus is the messenger. The virus moves through the body bringing the message (the same message) to every cell it contacts. That's its job, that's what it does. Some cells carry good messages, some carry harmful messages.....kind of like the world we live in ourselves.

At the core of Christianity is the radical idea that God wants to have a relationship with us as an individual and as a community of faith. Think about John 3:16? I wonder how many people know (or better yet, understand) what that verse says.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) That verse, known by so many believers says so much more than "you're going to Hell if you don't accept Jesus." It says, "God wants a relationship with you - and He wants it so much that He sent His Son to die in order to make a relationship with Him possible."

The calling of every Christian believer is to communicate that message to every being with whom we come into contact. Instead we want to communicate that abortion is wrong, that gay marriage is sinful, that we shouldn't smoke, or drink or chew - or hang around with people that do. We forget that these things are not the message of the Bible - the message of the Bible is God saying "I want a relationship with you - there are some things that stand in the way of that relationship, but I have made a way to have them removed - so we can be in fellowship together.

Listen to the words of John in I John 1:3 *"that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete."*

2. **One of the genes coded in the RNA is gag (Capsid Protein).** Gag is the protein that helps to form the inner core structure of the virus. It is the thing that gives the virus its shape and unique characteristics. It is the gag that uniquely defines one family of viruses from another.

Ultimately, what separates Christianity from other world views, religious systems, and organized communities is ***the person of Jesus Christ.***

The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus is what provides the shape of Christianity. It's not our views of heaven or hell, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, church government. It's not our moral or ethical superiority - it's not whether we don't dance or go to movies or grow our hair long - it is the teachings of Jesus, His moral exam-

ple, and His righteous life that shape our community - the church - if we claim Him Lord.

The cross is the theological and existential focal point of grace, love, justice, and forgiveness. Whether we talk about fact or experience - the cross is the focus. His resurrection is the VINDICATION of His mission & His message and opens the door for us to have new life.

3. **Another gene coded in the RNA is the pol (Reverse transcriptase).** Pol is the protein that replicates viral RNA and integrates the coded information into the host. It is the pol that takes the information contained in the RNA and transmits it to the new cell. It takes the old information under which the cell has operated and replaces it with new information.

Sounds very much like the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit embeds in us, new coded information. It rewrites our operational norms - it changes us. A person is not changed by going to church, by learning some Bible verses, by keeping the rules - a person is changed as a work of the Holy Spirit.

It was the Holy Spirit that transformed the disciples from fearful cowards to brave preachers; it was the Holy Spirit that made Zachaeus climb down from the Sycamore tree; it was the Holy Spirit that changed Saul from the persecutor to Paul the apostle. Contained within every virus is the capacity to change, to mutate into something that it was not - and then to effect change within every cell with which it comes into contact.

If Christianity has no capacity to change a man, and to change the society in which we exist, of what value is it. And so, the Holy Spirit works to transform and replicate this new genetic information in us (the character of Christ.) Romans 8:29: *"For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed (transformed into) to the image of his son..."*

4. **The third gene coded in the RNA is the env (Envelope protein).** The env protein pokes or protrudes out of the particle and allows it to latch onto a cell. The particle gets into a cell because the env acts like a key that opens the door to that cell, allowing the virus if you will to "infect" that cell - to get into the heart of it and write new information from the viral RNA - and it's in this way that the virus spreads through a community of cells.