

WOUNDED
HEALERS
IN THE MARKETPLACE



INSIGHTFUL NARRATIVE WRITTEN BY
MATS TUNEHAG

Life with Christ is not a story from rags to riches.
It is not about being successful with our plans.
We are not called to be successful but faithful
to God, and to say yes to his calling to be a part
of his story – not ours. Just like Mary.

She was invited to be part of God's metanarrative,
His greater plan. It was surprising, and not her plan,
and it involved confusion, shame and pain.
The angel Gabriel conveyed God's meta-narrative,
and described Mary's role in the Theo-drama,
and she said yes!

“And Mary said,
Yes, I see it all now:
I'm the Lord's maid, ready to serve.
Let it be with me
just as you say.”
(Luke 1:38)

EGO-DRAMA VS. THEO-DRAMA



Serving God and people in the marketplace is about choosing narrative: My story or God's greater story. Especially in an individualist culture and in relatively wealthy contexts, we tend to choose the ego-drama, which is about:

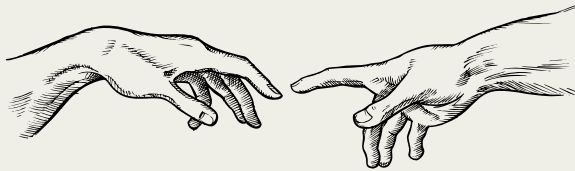
- My life
- My job
- My calling
- My interests
- My business
- My, mine, and I...

I am the producer, director, and star of my life, my story – **the ego-drama**.

But we need to ask how we fit into God's meta-narrative, to God's greater story and plan. Like Mary we need to understand God's big plan and narrative, and respond to his invitation to participate.

EGO-DRAMA VS. THEO-DRAMA

The biblical narrative has four phases:
Creation – Fall – Redemption – New Creation.



We even recognize these from many movies and stories around the world which have a similar basic narrative:

1. **Creation:** the ideal state, harmony, good relationships
2. **Fall:** a break, a crash, dysfunction, brokenness, death
3. **Redemption:** a tough long journey, sacrifice
4. **New Creation:** restoration, transformation, a new life

God's meta-narrative is told and retold in the Torah, the Psalms, and the Prophets, by Jesus, and the Apostles. The Bible is not a bullet point text to convey, but rather a story to live in, a **Theo-drama** to join. It moves from Creation to New Creation.

This is more than a general context for our information. We are to live and work in His story – that's how we can make history. We can understand our role in the marketplace by walking in his story. But we are not writing the script, we are not directing the show, and we are not the stars.

EGO-DRAMA VS. THEO-DRAMA

Mary accepted the invitation to actively be a part of his meta-narrative – the **Theo-drama**, which was also shared by her relative Elisabeth and her son John the Baptist.

The **Theo-drama** doesn't put me, mine, my, and I at the center. Rather it recognizes and confesses Kyrios Christos – Jesus is Lord. That involves my business, my plans, my investments, and my life. They are no longer mine, but his. We are to respond to his invitation to follow him, and to be part of His narrative. Just like Mary.

This also means stepping into some unknowns. God is the author of the story, the director, and the stage manager. We are not. Like Mary, we won't know what saying 'yes' fully implies, but we take steps of faith, trusting the author of the **Theo-Drama**.

C.S. Lewis writes in his essay "The World's Last Night": "We keep on assuming that we know the play. We do not know the play. We don't not even know whether we are in Act I or Act V. We do not know who are the major and the minor characters. The Author knows." He goes on saying that "we are led to expect that the Author will have something to say to each of us on the part that each of us has played. The playing it well is what matters infinitely."

WOUNDED HEALERS



We too often fail to acknowledge the obvious: we are not fully in control. Regardless of our strategic plans and professional business pursuits. The Covid pandemic was a global reminder of something nobody planned for or fully controlled. It caused a lot of suffering, but also opened up new opportunities.

Life is a journey which involves pain and stress, and we will be wounded and carry scars. But we are called to be wounded healers. Just like Jesus.

We have all had our ups and downs, hurts, pain, joys and successes. However, it is often expected of us to primarily talk about the joys and show our successes. But if we are honest and transparent, most of us - probably all of us - have been wounded and have scars. We may have failed like King David or the Apostle Peter. We may have been hurt by friends and betrayed by colleagues. But this is a part of our journeys. Let me share briefly from my personal journey, sharing some notes I wrote 2011. (<http://matstunehag.com/2011/08/21/a-wounded-healer/>)

WOUNDED HEALERS



Let me share briefly from my personal journey, sharing some notes I wrote 2011.

(<http://matstunehag.com/2011/08/21/a-wounded-healer/>)

“Sometimes I feel at home everywhere, and sometimes I feel at home no-where.

I have lived and worked in half the countries of the world, lived in fear at home because of severe threats against my family.

I've been a part of starting and developing the modern global Business as Mission movement, and for many years waking up every morning not knowing if one of my loved ones survived the night.

I have started and developed 30 or so international partnerships, and suffered through dysfunctions, hurts and breakdowns in my own organization and family.

I have rejoiced in fighting and winning a religious freedom case (Supreme Court in Sweden) which had good global legal impact and setting a precedent, and I went through a severe depression where life and most things were meaningless; I sometimes cried days on end.

I've been mugged by the police in Central Asia, and harassed and interrogated at night by police in China, I was invited by a Congressman in the US to address a dozen of ambassadors and diplomats from Central Asia and share about Business as Mission.

So who am I? May I be audacious and use a term from Henri Nouwen: I am a wounded healer. I have a passion for the least, the lost and the lowliest – and they may be unreached, persecuted, trafficking victims, unemployed – especially in Asia and the Arab world.

Life has elements of joy and pain, laughter and tears, successes and failures. And I am a wounded healer...”

WOUNDED HEALERS

So why do I keep going when life hurts? Why pursue Business as Mission, serving God and people in the marketplace? Because of God's call to join his story, and the hope we have in God's ability to bring the meta-narrative forward to redemption and restoration. And he is journeying with us, through pain and joy, so we in turn can be wounded healers. Like Jesus – the ultimate wounded healer.

But we are Easter people with a hope; to borrow words from Kody W. Cooper:

“Christians are a Holy Saturday people because we cling to a hope for the coming light precisely when the night is darkest.”



TIKKUN OLAM



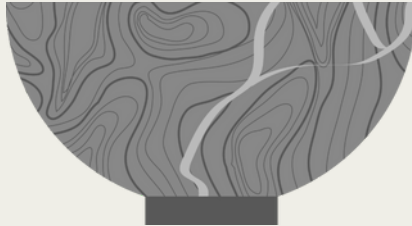
Being a wounded healer in the marketplace, is a part of a greater godly plan which the Jews call tikkun olam - repairing or bringing healing to the world. We are living in the tension of the world that is and the world as it ought to be. Tikkun olam means co-creating with God, and bridging the gap between the world which is, and to a world as it ought to be.

The American Jesuit theologian Roger Haight writes in 'Spirituality Seeking Theology' (2014): "God has entrusted creation to human beings not merely as caretakers of a past condition but as co-creators with God of the future."

The 2nd Vatican Council also dealt with this: "Christ's redemptive work includes also the renewal of the whole temporal order. ... God's plan for the world is that men should work together to renew and constantly perfect the temporal order. ... the family, culture, economic matters, the arts and professions, the laws of the political community, international relations,..."

We observe dysfunctions in workplaces. Not as it ought to be. We are appalled by rampant corruption. Not what God wants. We note how rampant unemployment is a root cause to human trafficking. Far from ideal. We need to bridge the gap from what is to what it ought to be. Thus, we pursue tikkun olam – repairing and healing the world. But our call is not to patch up a broken system, but as wounded healers work in and with the brokenness to create something new.

TIKKUN OLAM



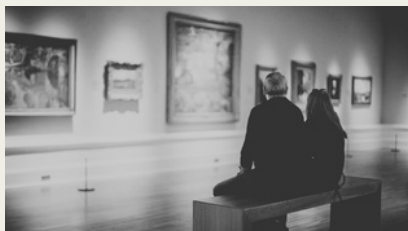
There is a Japanese art called Kintsugi. It is about repairing a broken pot or cup, by using gold to mend and restore a broken vessel. It becomes a transformed piece, creating a work of beauty through brokenness, and it makes the broken pottery more beautiful than the original. The artist and writer Makoto Fujimura puts kintsugi in a theological context:

“Redemption is more than fixing; it is a feast of healing and transformation.

... Not only are we restored, but we are to partake in the co-creation of the New through our brokenness and pain. ... God does not just mend, repair and restore; God renews and generates, transcending our expectations of even what we desire, beyond what we dare to ask or imagine.”

Our vision is beyond fixing a broken system, it is about a New Creation, transformation, and transfiguration. It is more like the caterpillar becoming a butterfly.

SLOW ART, BEING DEEPLY ROOTED

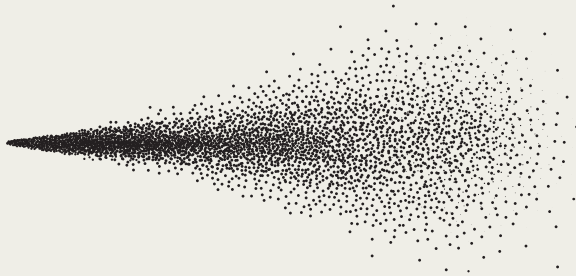


Makoto Fujimura talks about “slow art”; there are no quick or easy fixes. Drawing on centuries old traditions and lessons learned, it still takes a lifetime to manage kintsugi.

Similarly, doing tikkun olam is not like stirring in some “instant faith driven business mix” into the marketplace, saying ‘BAM it’ and expecting holistic transformation to take place quickly. Rather it is patiently praying and diligently exercising the tikkun olam prayer, day after day, year after year, through tears and laughter: May your Kingdom come in the marketplace, and may your will be done in my business. Bridging the gap.

Our worldview and business practice must be thoroughly infused and constantly informed by a few millenniums worth of Judeo-Christian thought. We must understand and live in God’s meta-narrative. Choose Theo-drama over Ego-drama. Operating as wounded healers in the marketplace, doing tikkun olam, is an art which takes years and decades of patient practice. Like kintsugi, we will only be able to create something good, true and beautiful in the marketplace if we are deeply rooted for the future. See article linked in footnote.

THE ODOR, TASTE AND SMELL OF JESUS ON THE MARKETPLACE



Thomas Merton wrote: “What is holy in our midst has something to do with the odor of dung on a stable in Bethlehem, the fruity taste of wine on the table at Cana, and the smell of dried blood on the cross at Golgatha.”

On our tikkun olam journey in the Theo-drama, we will face highs and lows, but we need to recognize what is “holy in our midst,” in the marketplace. Because doing business, as unto the Lord, will have “something to do with the odor of dung on a stable in Bethlehem, the fruity taste of wine on the table at Cana, and the smell of dried blood on the cross at Golgatha.”

Being involved in business, shaping it for God and the common good, will never be an easy ride or a smooth sailing. But we are to pursue an incarnational witness in all our relationships and dealings in the marketplace. And it may carry an odor:

THE ODOR, TASTE AND SMELL OF JESUS ON THE MARKETPLACE

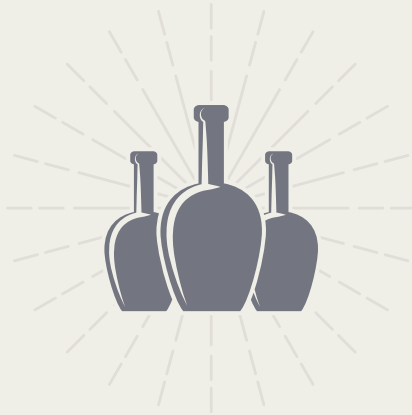


“...the odor of dung on a stable in Bethlehem, ...”

Joseph and Mary were forced to travel and make great sacrifices due to tax authorities. It was not a grand start of a relationship and family life. And not their choice, but an integral part of the Theo-drama that Mary had said yes to. It was most likely stressful, disappointing, and definitely smelly. But they carried Jesus into a smelly place, and he would transform many lives and circumstances.

The marketplace can be smelly. Starting and operating business can be stressful and disappointing. Dealing with tax authorities can be tough in any country. But God’s holiness can be displayed in the messiness of the marketplace. We are, like Joseph and Mary, to carry Jesus – into the marketplace – odor and all.

THE ODOR, TASTE AND SMELL OF JESUS ON THE MARKETPLACE

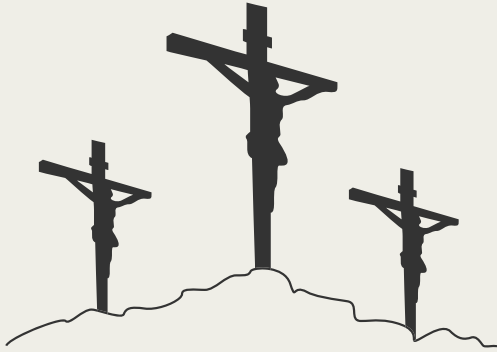


“...the fruity taste of wine on the table at Cana,...”

Jesus produced wine, not just any wine, but superb quality wine. At a time of celebration Jesus was not a party pooper. There are various times and seasons, a time to preach, and a time to make good wine and celebrate.

We want to make good quality products, and excel in serving our customers. Sometimes our businesses prosper and we can rejoice and “enjoy the good wine”, as it were. God’s holiness can be displayed both in the smelly and dirty stable, and in the festive occasion where material blessings abound.

THE ODOR, TASTE AND SMELL OF JESUS ON THE MARKETPLACE



“...and the smell of dried blood on the cross at Golgatha.”

There was a short time between Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem and the mob crying ‘crucify him’. Jesus fed the hungry and healed the sick, and he was also betrayed, abandoned, put through a mistrial and killed.

There are elements of dying, of pain and hurt, even as we engage in business and the marketplace. Some may sing our praises one day, and intentionally try to destroy our business the next day. Customers may steal and partners cheat. Authorities may falsely accuse you of wrongdoing.

But in all these ups and downs, we continue serving as wounded healers, living in God’s story – just like Mary, pursuing tikkun olam and practicing kintsugi in the marketplace.



**AMDG – Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam:
to the greater glory of God.**

Mats Tunehag