

Astonishing the judges

ONE look at the frumpy, frizzy-haired aspiring singer who compared herself to a British legend had the audience snickering and the judges rolling their eyes on the popular British television show “Britain’s Got Talent.” Let the mockery begin! As one of the judges joked at the end of her audition, he knew as soon as she walked on stage they were going to hear something extraordinary—something extraordinarily bad!

Exceeding Expectations

By now you have probably heard of Susan Boyle, the middle-aged Scottish woman whose appearance on the television show led her to become an Internet sensation with the video of her audition getting over 50 million hits on the popular site, YouTube. But when Miss Boyle first strolled onto the stage, the judges and the audience thought she would be anything but a sensation.

Then she began to sing. At first, the judges’ eyes widened and their mouths opened with astonishment. They were hearing something totally unexpected. As she continued to sing, their astonishment turned into appreciation. They were hearing a professional quality voice. One judge even said it was a privilege to have had the opportunity to listen to her performance. Toward the end the camera caught two of the judges smiling and sighing as though her singing brought them deep satisfaction.

Convincing Skeptics

I find a parable for the church in this inspiring story. Jesus tells us we are to be the light of the world, but the world in which we live expects little from Christians and is cynical toward them. When we appear on their stage, they are ready to laugh and mock us for trying to be something we are not.

What if, however, like Miss Boyle, we astonish them when we open our lives to them? They expect to see hypocrisy and harsh judgment. What if instead they see lives filled with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control? Would they possibly have more appreciation for Jesus and those who follow him?

Once seeing these qualities in us, could it possibly lead some of them to discover the deep satisfaction there is in knowing Jesus?

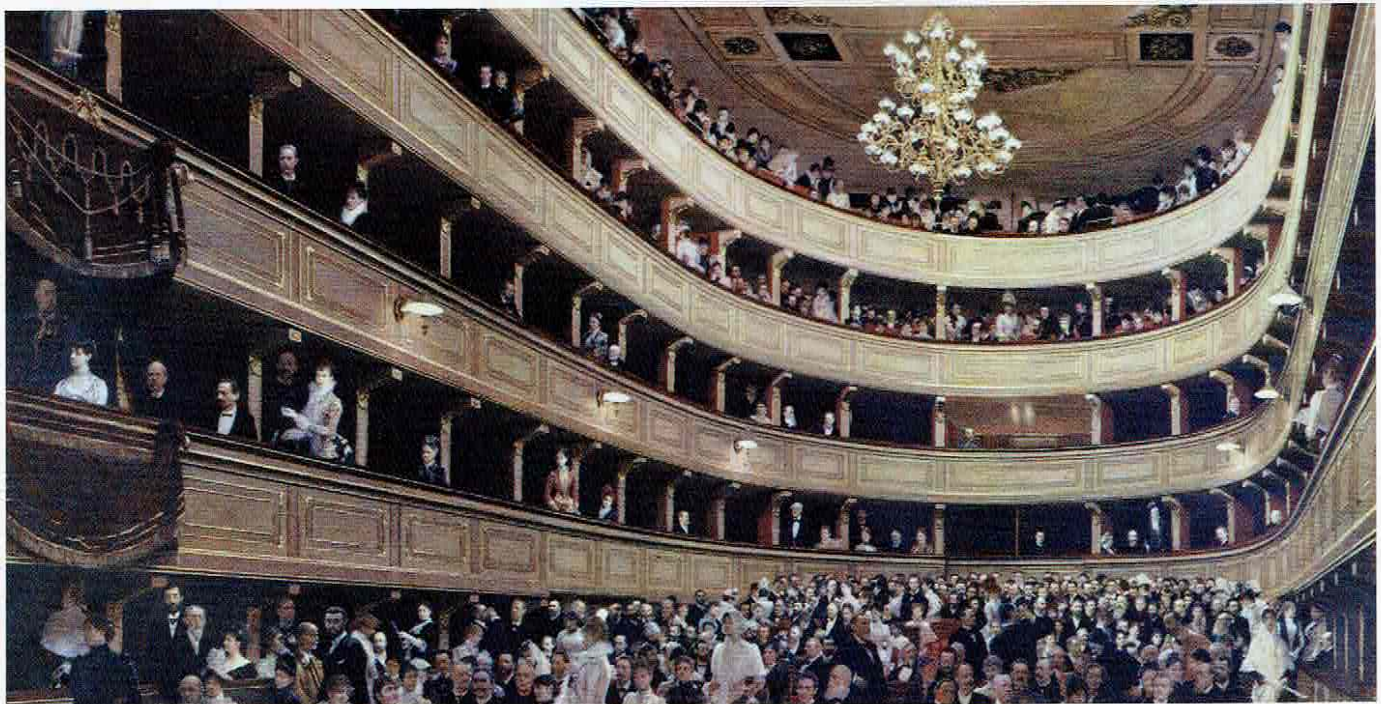
People are often cynical. And that cynicism leads them to draw quick conclusions about people and institutions. Honestly, they don’t expect much and are quick to laugh and

mock anything. This is particularly true regarding Christians and the church.

It isn’t much of a stretch to believe if our lives are filled with the fruit of the Holy Spirit that we will astonish many of the people who are quick to judge Christians, and, perhaps, even lead some of them to smile and sigh in deep satisfaction as they, too, fall in love with Jesus, who makes our hearts sing such a beautiful song. ■

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**Let’s amaze people
by the way we live.**



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