

SOME THINGS SEEM TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

I was offered 85 million dollars this week. The bad news is it was promised via 10 e-mails in my “junk” file.

Mr. Maha Saliou, a banker from Burkina Faso promised me 40 per cent of \$9.2 million. The conundrum, he explained, was that a wealthy businessman perished during an American bomb attack in Kandahar, Afghanistan in 2004 -- along with every single one of his relatives. Yep, no survivors. My ‘good friend’, Maha explained that if he and I didn’t move on the unclaimed dollars, the big bad bank would claim it as an abandoned fund. Why let perfectly good money slip through our greedy fingers. All I needed to do was send him a “little” personal information including full name, bank account information, SIN, phone numbers, address, occupation, sex and passport information. Then, ta-da, untold riches would be mine (insert evil cackle here).

In other e-mails, Prof. Williams offered US \$6 million, while Ganesh Kumar, crooked lottery worker in the U.K., pledged to “adjust” a sweepstake worth 4.5 million pounds – a win was assured. Moahmed Sani and Omar Mussa, both presidents of the same bank in Africa dangled \$26.9 million before me. Each described the same tragedy befalling large-scale depositors, who had perished in plane crashes. There must be a grossly incompetent airplane manufacturer out there somewhere.

Scanning the scum-mail awakened a nagging suspicion; perhaps these offers were not legitimate. What if they were (gasp) scams. The dream of presenting my wife with a Christmas Ferrari was fading fast.

Yes, unmerited favour showered upon an undeserving recipient is nothing more than a pipe dream -- a rip-off engineered for the originator’s gain. Nothing that amazing could be true. Right?

I suspect listeners were likewise skeptical when Isaiah, the prophet announced the imminent arrival of the Messiah: “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light...for to us a child is born, to us a son is given...”

A few years later, an angel announced to Mary’s husband, Joseph, “...you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

Sounds like an ancient precursor to Internet fraud -- offering opulent promises of undeserved favour to surprised individuals. However, true to human nature, imaginations must have run wild. What if it was true. What if a Saviour really had arrived and sin could be forgiven; a life-slate wiped clean. What if hope could stretch beyond the weariness of earth and anchor itself in heavenly eternal optimism. What if...

The Christmas message is an unexpected divine e-mail announcing astounding possibilities for spiritual prosperity -- a rich transfer of hope, joy, peace, strength and wisdom that awaits all willing participants. It boldly trumpets that not every preposterous promise is “too good to be true”. Sometimes our ship *does* come in. We



can reach the end of the rainbow and dig into the pot of gold. “What-if” fantasies *can* be fulfilled.

May your Christmas sparkle with celebration befitting the arrival of the King of Hearts. Crank up the music. Feast ‘till your scale protests. Laugh long into the night. Love lavishly and share generously. The longed for but unlikely has occurred.

No wonder we say *Merry* Christmas.

“...not every preposterous promise is “too good to be true”.

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