

United to Jesus
“But anyone united to the Lord
becomes one spirit with him.”
2 Epiphany B

Being a follower may not be what the founders of MENSA and Triple Nines intended. These two organizations boast members who score the highest on IQ tests. As its name suggests, Triple Nines out does MENSA's requirements for membership, a mere 98 percentile on the test. That means that Triple Nines members are the cream of the crop, the elite, when it comes to being a “brain.” The score in the 99.9 range.

David Garrett, a member of Triple Nines, lives in this super smart world. In his early 20s, he found he had some time on his hands, so he borrowed some books on musical composition and wrote a symphony. Not a song but a symphony. The 16 page work was no Mozart or Beethoven but this fully instrumented “Overture In D Minor” was pretty impressive for a first effort, according to his composition professor. Garrett has no formal training in musical composition and was working as a health insurance processor at the time.

Triples Nines love to learn on the fly and they tend to be good at a lot of things but master of none. They're not happy unless they can learn everything about whatever interests them at a particular time. According to Triple Nines, the super smart have "a boundless curiosity bolstered by an intellect so powerful it makes learning easy and fun." My son, who graduated from MIT, complained to his mom and I about such people. He admitted he did not have the brainpower it took to absorb the rapid fire learning required in Engineering.

David Garrett, now 35 years old and a first lieutenant in the Air Force, has expanded his curiosity over the last few years to include: Eastern philosophy, classical guitar, chess, reality theory and freehand drawing and the origins of the U.S. Constitution. He knows Japanese and Spanish, writes short horror stories, and teaches martial arts. And by the way, he's married and has three children.

According to *The Denver Post* (June 20, 2005), the latest research suggests that ultra-smart people process complex information more quickly and efficiently — perhaps because they have larger working memories, or their neural transmitters run faster, or both. This seems to be the case with Derek Buzasi, an astrophysicist at

the Air Force Academy, who says he reads so fast that he finishes the average novel in 45 minutes.

So? Was that what Jesus was looking for when he called his disciples? Jesus is looking for people with an equally rare and valuable gift: the faith factor. Jesus is looking for people for membership in the Twelve Plus Society.

At first its unclear as to whether he's found such a person in Nathanael. When Nathanael hears that Jesus is from Nazareth his prejudice shows. He asks the question, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth." It would be no different than someone thinking that living in Janesville was better than someone living in Beloit. It would be like a Triple Nines member snubbing a MENSA member over 1.9 percentage points.

It was difficult for Nathanael to make this move of faith to join Jesus. Each of us is invited to join Jesus in the Twelve Plus Society as Nathanael was. Nathanael becomes a model for all of us today. He became "One of the Twelve" society and now that exclusive group becomes the "Twelve Plus" to include all those who have "the faith factor." These are those whose future is uncertain as they walk in faith, but it is a future

that trusts Jesus to be leading us in the right direction.

We are beckoned to “Come and See” as Philip said to Nathaniel. We never know what to expect. That is the nature of faith. Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things we can’t see, according to the letter to the Hebrews.

Who then can you trust?

Garrison Keillor of “The Prairie Home Companion,” tells the story:

Oley was in a rather embarrassing accident, and had lost both ears. He was in the hospital all bandaged up, and his best friend, Sven, wanted to visit him. He asked Lena if it would be okay, and she said “Sure, but just don’t call attention to his ears. He’s very sensitive about the accident, so don’t mention his missing ears.”

So, Sven dropped by the hospital to talk with his buddy. And he said, “So, Oley, how are your eyes?”

“My eyes,” responded Oley. My eyes are fine. But why would you ask?”

“Well,” said Sven, “I was just wondering how you are going to hold up your glasses!”

Who can you trust?

Who will you trust with your life when you are beckoned to “Come and See” or follow the crowd? Jesus says “Follow me.”

Who will you call when you are tempted to go the way of the crowd and give up your membership in the Twelve Plus Society? Jesus says, “Follow me.”

Where will you look for answers to life’s questions, when there are so many people telling you what to do? Jesus says, “Follow me.”

By our baptism we followed Jesus into the waters of new birth. United to him, we follow, he leads and we become one with him and we find we can trust him.

How can we dare trust anyone or anything else? He who loved us gave us supernatural gifts of courage, faith, love and hope. Amen.