

The Great Imposter

Born in 1921 in Massachusetts, Ferdinand Waldo Demara Jr. grew up and went to Catholic school just like so many other kids around him. He never finished high school, instead he wound up in a monastery, but would soon leave it too but later confessed that his time there was one of the most enjoyable of his life. Demara's beginning seem anything but extraordinary, yet for the next 30 years his life would indeed be such. Perhaps the name Ferdinand Waldo Demara Jr. doesn't "ring a bell", it didn't with me until I began the research for this article. But Mr. Demara will be known in history as "The Great Imposter". Throughout his life Demara made his mark in history by taking on false identities and he did not just imitate your average person on the street. Throughout his career as an imposter he posed as a zoology Ph.D., law student, cancer researcher, hospital orderly, deputy sheriff and teacher. He even was arrested and spent six months in jail for posing as a teacher. His most famous exploit was imitating a surgeon while in the Royal Canadian Navy. He performed many operations including removing a bullet from a man's chest. Demara was blessed with the gifts of a great intellect and a photographic memory and taught himself from text books the skills needed in order to make the impersonations successful. It appeared that Demara never led this life of the masquerade for personal gain, it was said that he was just mischievous. He died a sad, depressed man in 1982, those close to him said that he felt as if he had wasted his talents.

Within the realm of Christianity we find imposters as well. There are people that appear to be holy, righteous children of God when in fact they are the devil's servants. We're talking about "Fake Christians", those that the Bible describe as deceivers who are the greatest of the imposters. The fake Christian has many characteristics of the sincere servant of God, they attend worship, pray, and do many good works all in the name of the Lord. But from certain passages we read that even though they appear to be righteous on the outside, inside they are filthy and rotten to the core (*Matthew 23:25-28*). We need to heed the warnings of Paul when he wrote young Timothy and said "*For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!*" (*2 Timothy 3:2-5*). We must be careful to avoid such people and more importantly we must be sure that we don't share any of these characteristics with these imposters.

God wants us to serve him with honest and pure hearts, and if we do we will produce the fruits of the Spirit (*Galatians 5:22-23*) when we worship and live for Him through our Lord, Master and Savior, Jesus Christ!

*Jay Launius
Maud church of Christ
Maud, Texas*