

**16 March 2018**

**“Focus on Christ”**

My friend, retired pastor Kent Millard, shared with me part of an absorbing speech by Dr. Leonard Sweet. Sweet is an engaging speaker and told that hanging down in the center of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem—where Israeli soldiers surround Palestinians—is a huge ostrich egg. In fact, many churches in the Middle East have an ostrich egg hanging in the sanctuary.

Lamentations 4:3 refers to the ostrich as a desert creature. In order to protect its egg from predators, the ostrich buries the egg deep in the desert sand so it will be safe while the mother ostrich searches for food. However, sometimes the ostrich buries the egg so deep that the mother loses the location and can't find it to continue sitting on it until the birth of the baby ostrich. Consequently, the ostrich develops an ability to keep one eye on the location of the ostrich egg and the other on looking for food. Middle Eastern churches established a tradition of hanging an ostrich egg in the center of their sanctuary to remind them to keep one eye on Christ while they were out caring for their own needs.

It's a good image and an apt one for our Lenten journey toward the cross. We always should keep one eye on Christ while we are out in the world looking after our own needs or else we may lose the most valuable thing in the world. Can we so live our lives that we always have one eye on Christ, asking what Jesus would do and what is Jesus doing while we are living our lives out in the world?

Without our continuous vigilance it is easy for us to lose focus on Christ and allow other concerns and commitments to take over our lives (Thanks to Kent Millard for this illustration).

Come, Worship  
Stay, Learn  
Go, Serve