

Lamenting The Future Of The USA



3-6-2025 To The Genuinely Born Again Outside the USA (Part 2)

Corporate Business-Style Christianity And Unabashed Entertainment

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus our Lord,

FYI: The biblical pattern of first century faith communities was a gathering of mutual participation by the Holy Spirit in each others' homes. But from the time of Emperor Constantine in the early 4th century, large public edifices with organized seating and a single leader up front conducting a religious service became the norm. These weekly public gatherings were modeled after the pagan Greek stage performances in which the audience was **passive spectators**.

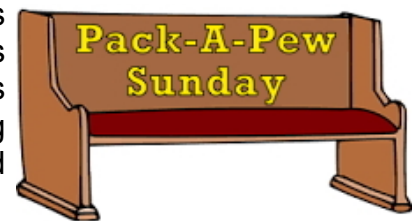


And this system of non-participation has continued for centuries in both Catholic and Protestant circles. But, in the 1950s faith communities in the US came under another unbiblical attack. Following WW II, liberal lawyers traveled throughout the country to inspire fear in clergy that they would be held personally accountable if they were sued during the course of their ministry work. Most congregations up to that time were not incorporated. But out of fear of lawsuits, many clergy gave in to the world's way in this matter: incorporate to protect yourself! Most congregations eventually did incorporate. As a result of being a "religious corporation", churches were eligible to borrow large sums so they could build larger and more up-to-date edifices.

The rise of the Church Growth Movement and its "seeker friendly" marketing strategy



The Church Growth Movement in the US first emerged in the 1970s among evangelicals. The objective was to develop **business-like strategies to increase congregation size – size was the true measure of success**. Their marketing motif: "Let us show you all the different ways we can entertain you and keep you interested so that you and your family will stay in our church (and help pay the bills)." Clergy increasingly sought Board members who were successful by the world's standards. And many religious leaders as well as major ministries resorted to corporate marketing schemes to pay their bills and expand their own personal acclaim.



SOS But this competitive drive to lure people meant that congregations became strapped with immense mortgages. And desperate clergy weren't about to drive away the people they needed to pay the mortgage by preaching an unpopular message to repent. Since a number of seminaries had begun to minimize the importance of repentance in Christians, sermonettes filled with humor and self-help messages replaced biblical discipleship, especially the need to turn from sin and to make our Lord's commands a way of life. (What we just shared had enormous influence on the rise of nominal Christianity in the US, resulting in the forthcoming chastisement of this nation).

Corporate Business-Style Christianity Doesn't Allow For Mutual Participation

"When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up" (1Corinthians 14:26, eliminated by the institutional religious system, as were Romans 12:3-8; 1Peter 4:10,11).

Shortly after we began running a retreat center (1983), a pastor of one of the larger churches in Connecticut [we'll call it XYZ Church] came on a personal retreat for a few days. We were interested in how the biblical process of **mutual participation** operated on such a grand scale, so we asked him, "How do you get people to participate in such a large congregation?" "We don't want participation," he bluntly responded. He added, "As the church grows, we hire new staff. We currently have 21 paid employees." We asked him one more question: "How do you deal with sin in such a large congregation?" His reply? "I'm unaware of any sin in our church."

A few weeks later a friend who was pastoring a church nearby called for some advice. "Mike, a young man who used to be part of my congregation while he was a college student now attends XYZ church. He revealed to me that he's been having an affair with the worship leader there for three years and now the Holy Spirit is convicting him that he can't stay in this relationship. What should I tell him?" Mike responded, "Send him back to the pastor of XYZ Church. I'm sure he would like to know that there's some sin in his church!"

✚ Whether you live in another country or in the US, please take this observation to heart. Any faith community that evaluates success by size are particularly vulnerable to the deceits of Satan. This is true of any faith community in which the leadership themselves are NOT:

- clean of unconfessed sin,
- free from demonic strongholds,
- shepherding and discipling the Father's children by personal contact and role modeling.

The US Is A Nation That's Fixated On Unabashed Entertainment

The US population (including nominal "Christians") are the product of several generations who are dependent on TV, movies, the internet and/or social media. We are a thoroughly **entertainment-oriented society in which few if any moral standards prevail**. In their obsession to be entertained, people are presented with countless hours of scenarios in which •no one seeks our Lord Jesus, •does our Father's will, or •upholds the commandments. •Never is anyone portrayed as turning to the Holy Spirit for guidance.

Instead, entertainment has become the bastion of Humanism in which mankind's personal pleasure and gratification is the highest goal in life. If someone is facing a difficult situation, the Humanism-driven media offers human solutions or superhero responses. But no one humbly seeks after the one True God for answers which only He can bring. Has it ever occurred to you as you watch these various entertainment outlets that no one repents or asks forgiveness? Don't think that this Humanist, Godless imagery is harmless fun. The nominal Christian worldview is saturated with it!



God-less entertainment in the US has had far more influence on nominal Christianity and its spread in this nation than can be counteracted by Sunday preaching, Bible studies, or retreats. Certainly our Father and our Lord Jesus hold no primary place in the lives of nominal Christians. And as we've noted many times before, **nominal Christians and unbelievers embrace the same levels of immorality and self-obsessed worldly goals and values.**

Conjuring A Mood As The Unbiblical Medium For Worship

“God made human beings upright, but they have devised many schemes” (Ecclesiastes 7:29).

Demonic inroads disguised as "entertaining worship" wormed their way into Christianity in the 1970s and became entrenched in public worship by the 1980s. Entertainment is designed to please or gratify those who are taking part in it, and few large congregations wanted to be left behind in the "competition" for attendees. Therefore a number of them introduced a form of divination through **“mood conjuring”** in worship services. The purpose was to generate an emotional state which makes a worshipper feel good regardless of whether they are free of unconfessed sin or not. This practice of mood conjuring has become so widely accepted during worship services that it can hardly be distinguished from a rock concert. You'd be hard-pressed to differentiate the melodies and rhythms of much “worship” music from the secular music offered by the rock industry. And the same “soulful response” is aroused by both!



“Mood conjuring” worship which entertains isn't spiritually convicting to people who cling to unconfessed sin. And “seeker-friendly” worship which allows the unrighteous to feel good about themselves has swept the nation by storm. Yet from our holy Lord's perspective this practice is abominable! It offends Him and thoroughly deceives the unrighteous into believing they're fine “just the way they are”.

We first became aware of mood conjuring during worship in 1983 shortly after our arrival at a retreat center in Connecticut. The staff of a sizeable congregation held a retreat at our center. Since their discussions took place in a lounge area just outside our office, we overheard quite a bit. Toward the end of the day Mike had a chance to speak with the senior pastor. When Mike asked why the pastor was putting so many thousands of dollars into his worship team, the man replied, “That’s why our church is so large. **Entertaining worship attracts people!**”

In the months to follow we read of seminars being conducted around the country to train worship leaders how to kindle lively, entertaining worship. Sue and another staff member at the retreat center attended one of these seminars put on by a “mover and shaker” of the lively worship camp whose techniques were being used to attract many into church buildings. We read with alarm the seminar leader’s workbook on worship which Sue was given. Not one place in the whole book cited a biblical basis for the methods he was espousing! Instead he emphasized the importance of people encountering a satisfying, pleasurable worship experience.



This sorry trend has continued. As more and more clergy in the US caved into Humanism’s pursuit of happiness and self-gratification in their preaching, they eliminated the vital importance of repentant and holy living. And as their preaching kept citing “Jesus is your life-improver”, then mood conjuring worship became even more popular.

FYI: We both love to worship! For a while we visited many “lively” worship congregations only to have the Holy Spirit speak to Mike while the “worship leader” was trying to induce the “right mood” into worship. The Spirit told him, ***“The Father will not be conjured up like the priests of Baal tried to conjure up their god!”*** Mike has a prophetic gift, and like so many with similar gifting, he gets spiritually nauseous from the odor of unrepentance around him in those who claim to be Christian. As with many of you, we’d rather worship privately or with followers of Jesus who intentionally stay clean in Christ by His grace and please our Father. That’s far more life-giving to our spirits than standing in an assembly that’s reveling in a soulish high.

A Final Thought For the *Genuinely* Born Again In Other Nations

We’re deeply concerned for our brothers and sisters in other nations who consider Christianity in the US to be a successful role model for them to follow. We’ve observed that congregations in several nations wrongly rely on the renown of their pastor’s preaching or on the reputation of their lively worship to attract attendees. But weigh this: Whenever a congregation relies on marketing to attract attendees, the Holy Spirit has no part in it. You could say that **marketing** and **conjuring** are unbiblical. So for you *genuinely* born again in other nations, especially those of you who lead faith communities: Don’t view Christianity in the US as “successful” in the eyes of our Lord Jesus. Compromised with unholiness and worldliness, the entertainment-centered Christianity in the US is a strong reason that chastisement is coming upon this nation.

**Authentic Bible-based worship is homage from the heart,
and adoration that’s rendered to our Father
by those who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit
and are free of unconfessed sin.**

Worship is about our Father. It’s not about gratifying you or praising your choir or worship team for how well they perform. As Jesus said, *“The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth”* (John 4:23,24). Truth means that your innermost being is not deceiving itself that worship with unconfessed sin is acceptable to our Father. True worship isn’t a form. Rather it’s the adoration which proceeds from truth within your inner person. The psalmist understood the issue of being free from unconfessed sin (Psalms 51:7-17). He expresses this same truth again: *“Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully”* (Psalms 24:3,4).

Even when we renew our Covenant with our heavenly Father through spiritually partaking of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus in communion, He has righteous criteria for His own:

“Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep [have died]. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged” (1Corinthians 11:27-31).

Being acceptable to our heavenly Father and achieving success by the world’s standards are incompatible! May this be true for all *genuinely* born again throughout the world: *“The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you”* (John 14:17; see also 15:26; 16:13; 1John 4:6).