

The Curse of the Church



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This article doesn't address all types of ills in Christian churches. It focuses on one, yet we feel it is the primary one. That elementary "Curse" is sin. Yes, the Bible says that when Adam and Eve sinned in Eden, God pronounced a "curse" on man, woman, the earth, etc. However—and other Scripture bears this out—Man cursed himself in the very fact and act of sinning. Sin itself is a curse. Man who gives residency to sin, works against himself, as well as against God, God's world and God's universe. Notwithstanding this, there is a popular brand of "Christianity" that "Christians" lie, cheat, have sex outside of marriage, etc., and then ask forgiveness of God; a type of "revolving door redemption." This is a perversion of Christianity; an abomination and a curse. It makes God sick, makes the church sick and leaves the world sick. Yet sadly, Jesus spoke of wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15), like the clipart for this article with a witch almost appearing to wear the clothes of a Pilgrim. The pulpit has gone silent in its faithfulness to proclaim and demand God's standard for holiness. The results have been devastating. As God spoke through Isaiah, it is "*the desolations of many generations*" (61:4). This devastation from within the church has bled out into the nation. Thank God, He also says in Isaiah that there can be a restoration of that desolation...IF (and it's *always* IF) we will pay the price!

I have no doubt but what God's forgiveness is not even sought by many church members for outward sins, or sins of the hidden heart like covetousness, pride, jealousy, all types of anger (see St. Paul, e.g. Ephesians 4:31), and so on. As God's people, we are to "*be holy, because God is holy*" (1 Peter 1:15,16). This holiness is not some sham, superficial, cheap stuff that has been illustrated in books and sermons by a barnyard full of cow manure (typifying our sinfulness) covered in a blanket of beautiful, white snow (representing the purity of Jesus). Some may think this is "slick" thinking, when it is "sick" thinking. Many in the modern church are more interested in their branch history or traditions (or any number of other things!) than they are about living "*in righteousness and holiness*

before God all the days of our lives" (Luke 1:74,75), as John the Baptist's father proclaimed. Other professing Christians appear utterly absorbed in every worldly fashion and interest, although St. John says that "*if we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us*" (1 John 2:15). St. James adds that "*if we love the world, we are enemies of God*" (4:4). God's call is to holiness with no compromise for sin in one's life, and St. John leaves us in no doubt, stating "*If we say that we have fellowship with Him [God], and walk in darkness [sin], we lie and do not the truth*" (1 John 1:6). True, he writes "*And if any person sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous...*" (1:1).

Though God's mercy graciously includes the restoration of "fallen soldiers," the undeniable thrust and high standard is for victorious holiness of heart and life. There needs to be a revival of holiness in the church and an abandoning of this perverse, cheap, sloppy, careless, disgusting and ineffective brand so common today.

Oh, to be sure, many of these are not "sloppy" in the worldly sense, for they wish to look like executives, fashion models, and study the ways of "successful" writers and speakers so they can know better "how to do it!" All of this represents the curse and poison and disease of the church which tries to find *WHATEVER* to substitute for the Shekinah presence and glory of God in the midst. Admittedly, many professing Christians don't even know what the glory of God is, and are not even aware that anything is missing! But friends, there is no substitute for the real—and that includes so-called speaking in "*unknown*" tongues, and the emotion-filled concerts, conferences and seminars where we find today's "best."

This mentality, too-often found in some evangelical circles, has given birth to various mutated forms of "Christianity." It is this acceptance and allowance of double-standard professing Christians that results (to no surprise!) in Pamela, a former-pin-up girl now allegedly turned Sunday School teacher, to continue advancing the stripper lifestyle by proxy via a cartoon based on herself and using her own voice. St. Paul says we are to "*abstain from all appearance of evil*" (1 Thessalonians 5:22), yet innumerable professing Christians lap up sin as a hungry dog laps up its favourite gravy.

Another example of this attempt to "serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24 and many more!) comes to us as a self-proclaimed "shy, God-fearing young female" says that "her other self," named Sasha, allows her "to strut her stuff," meaning she shows off her body to an eagerly lustful world. Then I ask, what kind of "support" could the minister possibly have offered to his church member (Makosi) who "threw the baby out with the bath water," and,

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having cast her conscience to the wind, paraded her perverted ungodly manner before the world in such mire as TV's Big Brother? If, like Jesus, the minister would find her ready for true repentance, and say *"neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more"* (John 8:11), that would be true Christ-like "support" in similar circumstances. But no, **"Dr. Jekyll Christians"** like Sasha can lead a double life, and perfectly fit into the church today without need to change. **"Sasha Christians"** may seem an extreme and harsh term to other Dr. Jekylls who "like to look good" (as one "preacher" I know told me of himself!). These prefer to look good *outwardly*, when *inwardly*, as Jesus said, they are as full of wilful sin as a grave is full of bones (Matthew 24:27). **This is one of the old misconceptions regarding sin** that a murderer, for example, is sinful, but proud, covetous, lying, deceitful "Christians aren't!" To Christians, St. Paul asks and answers the question in Romans 6:1,2: *"Shall we continue in sin so that grace may be greater? God forbid!"* [another translation answers *"Certainly not!"*] St. James makes it clear in his call to holiness that *"the double-minded man is unstable in all his ways"* (1:8), and therefore James cries out: *"Cleanse your hands you sinners, and purify your hearts you double minded"* (4:8). This double-call is for a double-problem: sin in actions and sin in the heart—and both are to go!

This same cheap "Christianity" not only perverts inward and outward holiness of the "Christian," **it simultaneously perverts the commitment to "go into the highways and hedges" (Luke 14:23) with a passion for souls.** Jesus did not give us a command to violently force people into true Christianity (which is an impossibility), but He DID give us the command to do all we can do, as Wesley put it, "with all the violence of love," to win them to the One who came and suffered and died and rose again for their salvation from this very "thing" so many in so many churches wish to cuddle and excuse. As a result, many professing Christians do absolutely nothing to win the lost to Jesus. This type of "Christianity" is not the Christianity of the Bible. This kind of mentality has no real concern *for* or understanding *of* the heinousness of one's own sin, nor the damnation of the lost, nor of the holiness of God, nor of any of those things that matter most to God and have the greatest implications and consequences as it concerns the human family. **And there are some "evangelicals"** to whom I must say the following: a holiness—imputed or imparted—that does not reach out to the lost in genuine love, rather than in a harsh, disgusting, unfeeling *"holier-than thou"* attitude (Isaiah 65:5), is not the holiness that Christ brings to us for the sake of a lost world.

A pagan world cannot curse the Church, nor can a secular society or government defeat or destroy it. It is defeated and destroyed from within. When the pagan king Balak hired that compromising prophet, Balaam, to curse God's

people, God changed his curses into blessings! Much can be said about Balaam. In Numbers 23:10, He declared that he wanted to *"die the death of the righteous,"* but without living the LIFE of the righteous—just like many professing Christians today, not to mention many outside the Church. Balaam was like those whom Jesus said would come to Him at the judgment pleading their *"many wonderful works,"* and how they had even cast out demons in His name! (see Matthew 7:21-29 with 25:31-46). Yet Jesus said that He will say, *"Depart from me, you workers of sin, for I never knew you!"* They will go to Hell. Toward the end of Balaam's life story, since God would not allow him to curse God's people, Balaam got the great and successful idea of making it so that God's people brought God's curse upon themselves! How? Balaam came up with the idea of getting them to compromise by marrying pagans...and what judgment from God it brought! Balaam was eliminated in the scenario of wrath, too, just like the Devil will be at the end. The question for professing Christians who compromise with sin and the world is: Do YOU wish to go down with the enemies of God? I'm telling you the truth, not merely "trying to scare people," for we are not saved by *fear* but by *faith*—a faith that loves and trusts and obeys God. Fear may lead to faith, but is not a substitute for faith, nor will fear ever bring into the life and heart what genuine faith can bring.

Jesus says, as recorded in Revelation 3:1, *"You have a name that you live, but are dead."* Thankfully, Jesus is introduced in Revelation as *"He that lives and who was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and have the keys of hell and death"* (1:18). St. Paul uses Christ's death and resurrection to illustrate our receiving life *FROM* Christ, though WE were dead *in trespasses and sins* (Romans 6). To all seven of those churches in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, Jesus not only gave His diagnosis with pin-point accuracy, He also revealed the remedy for the church's dreadful condition. The churches had a variety of damning symptoms, but the cause was the same: sin—Sin, with a capital S, for Sin is the capital problem in the church...and, hey, if we take the "S" from "Curse" we have "Cure!" Need I say more?

What a Hallowed occasion when sin is swept from the heart, as if by a rushing, mighty wind (Acts 2). Pentecost was for cleansing the already-saved believer, and filling that believer with the Holy Ghost, thereby augmenting Christian unity, fitting the believer for missionary evangelism everywhere to win souls and disciple them, as well as make the believer fit and ready for heaven!

