

General Topics :: False Converts / Altar Enticements**False Converts / Altar Enticements - posted by FireinmyBones1 (), on: 2004/3/12 10:15**

Brothers and sisters,

Today I wanted to write a small bit concerning false conversions.

As I look around at the church (or what passes as the church) of our day, it becomes increasingly apparent to me that most claiming adherence to christianity are not even born again. I say that with a bit of caution, for it is the Holy Spirit who does the work of regeneration and the like, not Jeff. However, if you think on the actual birthing process, it would have to be traumatic.

Can you imagine if we could still remember being born? I believe it would wake us up with nightmares. You live for 9 months in a dark, wet, tight space. Then suddenly you are being squeezed out of a small opening, bright lights are flashing in your face, there are about a half a dozen faces (which you've never seen) waiting for you, and then one of them slaps you! HOW RUDE! That is traumatic! Yet most who claim to be born again, can hardly even put their finger on a specific time, or period when it occurred.

When a child is born into this world, there is not question as to when and where it happened. It can't be forgotten, or suppressed. How on earth is it today that the born again experience has been reduced to nothing more than a measly prayer at the altar, and then 5 minute counseling with an usher? Why is it that we bring them to the altar, some may genuinely be under conviction, but we don't (as Duncan Campbell said) let them "stew in it". We quickly bandage up the wound inflicted by the arrows of the Lord so that they never really feel the sting. We quickly lead them in the "sinners prayer", and send them on their way! Is this really New Testament stuff here? Is this really the way Paul and the Apostles would have done it? Where is the pushing, where is (dare I say) the pain of true conversion? When a child is born there is that unmistakable, unforgettable cry that pierces the air. Where is that cry of true conversion? But most of all, and I think this is the hinge, where is the counting of the cost?

The "gospel" that is being preached today is hardly an offense (not that offending should be our goal). Jesus is called the stone that causes men to stumble and the rock of offense. Where is that gritty, offensive nature of the gospel? Historically, the true gospel is something that the unrepentant sinner loathed. They would mock, beat, imprison, etc... the fire baptized messenger bringing the "Thus Saith the LORD!". Brother Ravenhill describes General Booth's day in the Salvation Army in "Weeping between the porch and the altar". He says that men would come under such conviction of sin that they would literally shred the hymnals. Where is that in our gospel? Where is that element that causes men to really sit back and wonder, "Am I really willing to pay such a price?" Where is that element that causes men and women to "shred hymnals" as they decide who's they will be?

Yes my friends, today's gospel is less like a coal from the altar (which hurts at times), and it is more like, "an offer we can't refuse". We try to "draw the fish to the boat" using lures and bait with names like "Prosperity", "health", "Benefits", etc... Our gospel presentations sound more like late night infomercials than words from the Throne. I believe this to be a main part of the problem. We don't give the people something to struggle with. We present something so "pre-chewed" that it's far too easy to swallow. People then accept our gospel way too quickly. They never went through that cost-counting period. It was a snap decision based on a desire to enhance their life. I'm reminded of the story of the rich young ruler in Matthew 19:16-30,

"Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"

Let me interject here and say that if a man ran up to me on the streets almost "begging" me to lead him to Jesus, I may have bowed my head and led him in a prayer. Thank God Jesus did not.

"Why do you ask me about what is Good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments."

Jesus then names the commandments leaving out the first 4. The man's answer is that he has kept them all. Jesus then makes this glorious "altar call".

"Sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

When the young man heard this he went away sad...

In our eyes it would appear as if Jesus blew it. He had the man practically begging Him to be saved. Yet Jesus used no

General Topics :: False Converts / Altar Enticements

lures, no "bait", He simply commanded the man to sell his riches, (Which were his idol) and give to the poor. This stung just way to much and the man went away sad. Now today we would take Jesus through a purpose driven life/church course and teach Him how to "really win the lost". We would teach Him that you must make the gospel appealing to the sinner, you must entice them with the perks of the Kingdom. But we would be wrong. (obviosly)

Something interesting happens just a few verses later in verse 28 - , Jesus turns to the men who were right by his side. The rich young man was probably still in ear shot. "...When the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging th e twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life."

Now had he used that on the rich young man, he may have followed Jesus. But Jesus never used the perks of the king dom to entice sinners. Rather He hit them right in the pressure points. He exposed the sin of their hearts and made the m uncomfortable. His words pierced the hearts of sinners like blazing arrows. He did not leave a trail of sweet, candy le ading to the Kingdom. It seems as if Jesus made it as hard as possible for people to make a decision. Why because if after all was said and done and they still chose to follow, then they would be faithful. Brothers and sisters, I ask, is the gospel you preach palatable? Or does it pierce to the heart? Lord set us aflame with YOUR words. May you place within us a burning word from the throne. When we speak may the hearts of sinners melt, because YOU Speak! Touch our lips even as you did to Jeremiah and place Your words within us! Amen!
Burning,
Jeff

Re: False Converts / Altar Enticements - posted by seekinggod (), on: 2004/3/12 15:35

Quote:
-----Where is that cry of true conversion?

Repentance and confession of sin to a Holy God is dead. False christ is on the throne, for the most part.

It is hard to find God in most churches.