



THE LOSS OF CONSCIENCE HOW THE WEST WAS LOST

By Albert James Dager

Our rejoicing is this: the testimony of our conscience, that we have conducted ourselves in the world—and more abundantly toward you—in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with carnal wisdom, but by the grace of God. (2 Corinthians 1:12)

“You have heard that it was said by them of old time, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you, that whoever looks at a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Matthew 5:27-28)

AS BELIEVERS IN the Lord Jesus Christ, we are aware of the need to be guided by His Word as revealed in the Scriptures. But the Lord has also given all men, believers and non-believers, an innate inner guide to help us know right from wrong. That inner guide is our conscience. The apostle Paul makes this clear:

For when the Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, not having the law, are a law unto themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel. (Romans 2:14-16)

There is a point at which a culture, a nation, has gone so far in its debauchery that the righteous Creator God can no longer abide its existence—at least to the point of maintaining its standing among the nations—and it must be judged.

When the Lord Jesus came to Israel He saw how far that nation had departed not only from His Law, but from its own conscience. Outwardly it continued to impose the Law, thinking that going through the motions would somehow ingratiate it to God. But God revealed to Israel that the Law was meant to strike deeper than how one should act. He declared that if one even harbored a desire for a particular sin, one was guilty of that sin:

“Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.” (1 John 3:15)



“Life is short; When you’re done, you’re done. We’re on this earth to have some fun.”
Prince Naveen, *The Princess and the Frog*

The Lord was telling the people that the Law is of no effect if men do not obey it out of a pure heart and conscience.

Over the next two millennia as the Gospel spread throughout the world, the conscience of mankind was struck with the truth of God’s Word. As imperfect as it was, even the Holy Roman Empire adopted the biblical ethic that established right from wrong in the thinking of its citizens, at least in terms of morality. But the morality of the Roman Catholic Church went beyond the dictates of Scripture and resulted in the imposition of new laws born of the religious attitudes of the hierarchy. Roman Catholics were taught that it would be a mortal sin, deserving of eternal damnation, to eat meat on Fridays and other prescribed days of the year; it would be a mortal sin to miss going to Mass on Sundays; it would be a mortal sin to not be in submission to the pope as the head of all Christianity. Yet

even then, conscience played a part. This imposition of man’s laws over the consciences of believers is in itself a serious sin, but it has an effect on the spiritual condition of the masses because if a man believes something to be wrong and yet does the act (or even desires to do the act), he is guilty:

I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself, but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. (Romans 14:14)

Such Scriptures demonstrate how important it is that men act according to their conscience. When Paul was taken to Caesarea to stand before Felix the governor, he stood in defense of his ministry by appealing to his own conscience:

“But this I confess to you: that after the Way which they call heresy, I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things that are written in the Law and in the Prophets, and have hope toward God, who they themselves also allow that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And I myself strive herein to always have a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.” (Acts 24:14-16)

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul again defends his conscience:

For our rejoicing is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and more abundantly toward you. (2 Corinthians 1:12)

With the Reformation came the casting off of certain Roman Catholic restrictions that went beyond the Word of God, although Protestantism did retain some Roman Catholic rules, and even developed its own code of ethics that it imposed on its followers but which are not mandated by God’s Word. Yet it was clear that, at least outwardly, Western Civilization had been so impacted by the Gospel that the conscience of the average citizen guided him in his conduct that tended toward godliness.

For centuries Western Civilization progressed and encompassed the earth through colonization. Although not all colonization was altruistic, the truth remains that western culture brought many material and spiritual blessings to the pagan nations that it oversaw. The problem was that western colonizers, and even the church missionaries that accompanied them, did not consider the people they colonized to be their equal in humanitarian terms. Converts to the faith were not allowed to become teachers without the supervision of the missionary, even after years of faithful walking with the Lord. Still, the Lord deigned to grant to the West, blessings that were, and are, unparalleled in human history. No doubt this is because, in spite of its failures on many fronts, Western Civilization maintained the biblical ethic and understanding of morality as the guiding principle not only for personal conduct, but for its jurisprudence.

That did not preclude those who refused the Word of God from acting out their sins. But such were considered outcasts and the dregs of humanity to the majority of westerners. There were certain things that were not considered proper to be spoken of in public, let alone propagated within the culture. But through the gradual erosion of the Gospel’s influence via many avenues, things that were at one time considered taboo are now not only openly practiced, but openly celebrated in society. As a result, there has also been an erosion of the conscience—even a loss of conscience—among a growing segment of Western society.

Millennia ago the Psalmist lamented the condition of Israel in his day:

The transgression of the wicked says within my heart that there is no fear of God before his eyes, because he flatters himself in his own eyes until his iniquity is found

to be hateful. The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit; he has stopped being wise and doing good. He devises mischief upon his bed; he sets himself in a way that is not good; he does not hate evil. (Psalms 36:1-4)

This is true today even more than it was when the Psalmist wrote this.

Some might doubt this. They might point to Scripture and history to show how debauched ancient civilizations had become. But consider that, if not in quality, certainly in quantity Western Civilization is exceeding the acts of depravity that have characterized pagan cultures of the past. What is worse, because of the advantage of Scripture that we have had for centuries, we have less of an excuse than they had. Non-Christian cultures have relied on the conscience of man to guide it—a conscience that at least saw that the creation is evidence of a higher being to whom men may one day answer. Israel had the prophets of God to guide its conscience, and even then that nation failed miserably. Western Civilization has had the more perfect Word of God—containing both the apostles and the prophets—which reveals the Father and His love through His only-begotten Son. And now we are failing no less than Israel and the pagan nations around us.

THE WORLD

The loss of conscience in the world is leading Western Civilization to the brink of destruction. The results of the wars in which the Western nations have engaged in the past century have especially contributed to the loss of conscience. It was bad enough that western powers became greedy in their imposition of colonialism; what could have been a blessing for the world turned into a scramble for power of one western nation over the other. Men became commodities to be traded as slavery became commonplace.

The competition for world domination among the western nations eventually led to World War I—a war among Christian nations that would be called “the war to end all wars” which resulted in over 15 million dead and some 20 million wounded and maimed, both military and civilian combined.

When the war ended, citizens in these Christian nations went on a spree which resulted in the Roaring Twenties and a breakdown in morality. Prohibition resulted in the rise of gangsterism and the glorification of alcohol, contrary to the intentions of prohibitionists. Even so, God was gracious to this nation that had contributed greatly to the furtherance of the Gospel among the nations. He brought it to its knees through the Great Depression, which should have hindered citizens from expending the little they had on worldly pleasures. Yet the industries that seemed to suffer least through the Great Depression were the entertainment and alcohol industries, as well as gambling and prostitution. Everything the mobs were involved in seemed to appeal more to the general populace as the Great Depression progressed.

Then came World War II, an even deadlier conflict than its predecessor: over 60 million killed. That was 2.5% of the world’s

population at the time. Consider: that's almost three out of every hundred people.

And after that war the Christian nations again went on a spree as technology began to provide more and more creature comforts that allowed for more free time to engage in pleasure.

Now, it isn't that all personal pleasure is evil in itself. Much if not most pleasure engaged in is morally neutral. But the free time granted through the influx of labor-saving devices did not result in more time spent with the Lord, in His Word, or in anointed ministry. The vast majority of free time is given to self-satisfaction in one way or another. The vast majority of man's technology is used for personal pleasure rather than for godly pursuits; the vast majority of science is used for man's benefit rather than for the benefit of God's Kingdom. And most ministry in the churches put man's "needs" before God's Word. All this has led to a spiritual malaise that has resulted in not only apathy, but rebellion against God. His Word appeals to those who call themselves by His name:

Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things that are done by them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are revealed by the light, for whatever reveals is light. (Ephesians 5:11-13)

For centuries Christians understood that certain things were a shame to even be spoken of. These were things that related to sexual immorality. We must acknowledge that it is still a shame to speak of these things. Yet we cannot escape what is placed so blatantly before us, not only in the entertainment media but in the news media. Worse, these things are flaunted even in elementary schools, and threaten even pre-school children. Add to these the Internet and its wide assortment of perverse content, and the average child today is certain to encounter things that, as Paul said, are a shame for even adults to speak about.

It pains me to even address these things here, but I believe the Lord is offering a warning to His people that His patience is wearing thin because the western nations, which bear His name among the vast majority of its populaces, are not only rejecting His Word, but are losing their conscience.

Pornography

For decades public officials have been reticent to ban pornography on many levels. The argument has been that pornography cannot be defined; what is pornography to one person may be art to another. That reasoning has led to insane and ungodly decisions in western society. But words have meanings, and the English language is clear on what is defined as pornography. According to *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (2009, Wiley Publishing, Inc., Cleveland, Ohio), pornography is 1) writings, pictures, etc. intended primarily to arouse sexual desire; 2) the production of such writings, pictures, etc.

As much as ungodly people wish to tell us that no one can define pornography, and that in the United States the First Amendment to the Constitution guarantees "freedom of speech," they and the politicians whom they support with their money and media exposure know that they are promoting

pornography. It has been tolerated within western society as something to be restricted only from minors, but even that restriction is hardly applied anymore.

A case in point is the experience of a mother who took her ten-year-old daughter to the Seattle Public Library on Sunday, January 22, 2012. Julie Howe went with her daughter to the DVD collection to find something suitable to watch with her. The computer (one among a bank of twenty) immediately next to the DVD collection was being used by a man viewing what a *Seattle Times* reporter called "Internet porn of the very nasty kind."

In spite of their immediate retreat, Howe's daughter saw the screen and couldn't compute what she was seeing. Howe emailed a manager at the library system to tell of her experience and how her daughter reacted: "I had a 10-year old crying in bed last night because she doesn't understand what she saw on the screen at the library where the man in the blue jacket was sitting, and it makes her feel weird and scared inside. This is not right."

Spokesmen for the Seattle Public Library system insist that they are not in the censorship business, and in spite of Howe's efforts they have refused to do anything to shield the general public, including children, from their computers.

This is a scenario that is being played out across the country, with testimonies of other parents concerned about what their children have seen on public library computers. But that has no bearing on the administrations and staffs of the libraries, or on politicians who don't wish to "infringe" on the First Amendment "rights" of citizens.

Sadly, it seems there are more people voicing their objections to parents who wish to protect their children than to the library systems that insist on pandering to fans of pornography. And it is lost on most that the First Amendment was intended to protect religious and political speech—not obscenity, which was at one time punishable by early American society.

Abortion

Fully half of Americans today believe that a woman has the right to choose whether or not to kill her baby in the womb. (We've offered sufficient reasons why abortion has no ethical or logical merit in our special report, *Abortion: Some Cogent Arguments*, which readers may order from us.) The highly-publicized decision of the breast-cancer charity Susan G. Komen for the Cure to cut funding for Planned Parenthood created such a huge backlash by women's organizations and politicians that Komen reversed its decision within days. Even so, many pro-abortion advocates continue to rail against Komen and have declared their unwillingness to forgive them for their "sin." The vast majority of reactions to the news has been supportive of Planned Parenthood, the largest facility in the world that provides for killing babies. No politicians took a position in favor of Komen's initial action, but many have lauded Komen for reversing that action.

Abortion is so well-accepted that vending machines are now popping up on college campuses to provide the "morning after pill" for students. It won't be long before the vendors start demanding the right to put them on high school campuses and, eventually, in elementary schools, all in the interest of "reproductive health."

Homosexuality

For the past thirty years homosexuality has been gaining strength in the West. The entertainment media have played a huge role in this. As early as the 1920s and 30s, veiled references to homosexuality in movies brought the subject into the consciousness of westerners. The ploy has been ingenious: the first step was to look at it askance, as something not to be mentioned, but acknowledged as existing; the second step was to address it with humor, even if it meant ridiculing homosexuals as “different”; the third step was to engender sympathy for homosexuals as outcasts of society, doomed to hide in the proverbial closet; the fourth step was to beg tolerance for homosexuality, allowing to “live-and-let-live.” Part of this was to take the emphasis off the word “homosexual” and substitute for it the word “gay”; the fifth step was to accept homosexuality as “normal” behavior, which should not be judged—further “live-and-let-live”; the sixth step was to promote homosexuality as something to celebrate (e.g., gay-pride parades, etc.); the seventh step was to insist that homosexuals should enjoy the same rights as everyone else, including “domestic partnership privileges”; the eighth step is now in progress—to grant full marital recognition to homosexuals.

When they were clamoring for domestic partnership privileges, leaders in the homosexual community stated that this was all they wanted; they weren’t interested in marriage, just the same rights and privileges under the law that married people enjoyed. That turned out to be a lie. There will be a ninth step: to prosecute anyone who says anything disparaging, not about individual homosexuals only, but about homosexuality in general.

This has occurred over the span of about eighty years, but the last four steps have taken place within only the past twenty years. Same-sex marriage has been in the approval stage for the past decade.

Same-sex ‘Marriage’

Some twenty years ago I said that the day was coming when we would be reading in the newspapers, marriage announcements for homosexual couples. This was long before marriage between same-sex couples was legalized anywhere in the United States. Now, recent polls show that a majority of Americans approve of same-sex marriage.

Throughout the history of mankind, no nation or culture—not even the most base of pagan cultures—has ever considered granting even so-called “domestic partnership” rights, let alone marriage, to homosexuals. To what, then, can we attribute the sudden surge in popularity and approval for same-sex marriage since 2001? And why is this popularity and approval so strong only in what would be considered “Christian” nations? I believe it is because the majority of our citizens have forgotten God (Romans 1:28).

Since 2001, ten countries (all western, except Israel) have begun to allow same-sex marriage nationwide: As well, some cities and states in Mexico, Brazil, and the United States have joined in. A few recognize same-sex marriages performed elsewhere. Among those, only Israel would not be considered a “Christian” nation.

(By “Christian” nation I mean a nation where the vast majority of citizens consider themselves Christians of one stripe or another.)

Proponents of same-sex marriage have been willing to exempt religious institutions from being forced to perform same-sex marriage ceremonies. But they refuse to exempt individuals engaged in businesses that traditionally cater to weddings, such as florists, bakeries, rental halls, wedding planners, etc. Anyone who refuses to conduct business with homosexuals who wish to “get married” are subject to stiff fines and even imprisonment.

In essence, the government is forcing people to act contrary to their consciences or face ruin. That, in a nutshell, is what really defines a police state: thought control. In a police state one may not express an opinion contrary to the state’s dictates.

Today, it is “freedom of speech” to act out against biblical morality, but that same “freedom of speech” does not apply to those who wish to act out against state-mandated immorality. Sadly, most people will comply with the state’s infringement upon personal conscience rather than suffer for conscience’ sake. It won’t be long before even religious institutions will be required to acquiesce to homosexuality at every level of ministry.

At one time the Bible formed the basis for morality in many parts of the world. Now the “morals” of the immoral form the basis of morality. Is it not incongruous that those who insist that morality and truth are relative dare dictate to us what is moral?

Almighty Mammon

Mammon is the god of this world even to many right-thinking people who will betray their conscience to keep their livelihood. In truth, every one of the areas to which Western Civilization has lost its conscience relates to Mammon in one way or another.

Pornography is a multi-billion dollar business that has the means to propagandize through the media and to buy politicians.

Abortion is a multi-billion dollar business that also has the means to propagandize through the media and to buy politicians.

Homosexuality is big business, not just for homosexuals who pander to other homosexuals, but to non-homosexuals who see the benefit of pandering to the homosexual community that enjoys above-average wealth.

Same-sex marriage is propped up by a class of people—homosexuals—whose median income is considerably higher than that of the average person because of their connections to the entertainment and news media as well as to government. Add to this their discriminatory policies in promoting from within their sub-culture, and the deck is stacked against morally-minded people. Now we are hearing how same-sex marriage is going to be a boon to the economies of states that adopt it, because of the increase in the wedding industry’s profits that are expected to reach into the multi-millions of dollars. So, again, the adage “Follow the money” is apropos.

As this claim of financial benefit gets more and more impressed upon politicians in other states, it’s only a matter of time before the federal government mandates same-sex marriage (or at least recognition of ceremonies performed in other states) as a constitutional right. The love of money is truly the root of all kinds of evil. The god of this world is loved far above the true God who created the world.

THE CHURCHES

If we lament the loss of conscience in the world, we must all the more lament the loss of conscience in the churches. After all, who voted and continue to vote into office the politicians who purposely enact legislation contrary to the very principles of God's Word? Since the first century the enemy has been at work within the churches to undermine God's Word, just as he did in ancient Israel. And the people have been only too happy to accommodate him. Many pastors and entire denominations already consider homosexuality acceptable to the god they believe in. Consequently, with few exceptions the religious culture in the West is not dissimilar to the culture of the world.

Pornography

This is an area that is still considered taboo among Christians, even in the most liberal churches. Thankfully pornography is still frowned upon in general, although, let's face it, many Christians, including pastors and other Christian leaders, are hooked on it (research has put the number at 56% of pastors). Eventually they will have no conscience about this particular sin. But so far it is still kept in secret.

Abortion

Among the more fundamentalist congregations abortion is also considered taboo, but there in an increasing number of churches that are being swayed toward the more liberal position in favor of a woman's right to choose. Some even champion abortion and fight vigorously to keep it legal.

Homosexuality

Mainline Protestant denominations, as well as many independent churches, are increasingly becoming "inclusive," which means open to homosexuals not for the sake of ministering God's grace and help to overcome their sin, but to ensconce them in positions of ministry and other authority within their congregations. They even "celebrate" homosexuality as a "gift" from God, even though it is contrary to the gifts and fruit of the Spirit as well as to the written Word of God. Even among some fundamentalists there is the belief that homosexuals have no choice in their behavior; they were born that way.

Same-sex Marriage

Many church groups have stood up to support same-sex marriage legislation, and have performed weddings for homosexuals. This will increase as more and more Christians become jaded to the idea. Despite the best efforts of defense-of-marriage organizations, and citizen referendums, same-sex marriage is here to stay, and because of the pro-homosexual propaganda in the media, government and public education it will become so normal to future generations that in a short time all the brouhaha will be forgotten.

THE COMMON DENOMINATOR

Notice that these national sins have one thing in common: they all involve illicit sexual activity. And that's where huge sums of money are invested. It is argued, even by Christians, that sexual sins are not the worst sins people can commit; stacked against murder, physical abuse, and even robbery, sexual sin doesn't hurt anyone. So let people do what they want. How does

it hurt heterosexual couples, they reason, if homosexuals get married? And so on, and so on. Let the world believe that lie. God's Word is our guide; not human "wisdom." Homosexuality and abortion are sins against nature, which sets them somewhat apart from other sins.

Pragmatically speaking, their arguments seem to make sense to the seared conscience. But what does God's Word say?

For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who withhold the truth in unrighteousness, because that which may be known about God is apparent in them, for God has shown it to them.

For His invisible things from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made—even His eternal power and Godhead—so that they are without excuse because when they knew God they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became vain in their imagination, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed animals, and creeping things.

Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

For this reason God gave them up to vile affections, for even their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature. And likewise also, the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust toward one another—men with men, doing that which is indecent, and receiving within themselves the return of their error, which was suitable.

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things that are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, greediness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, quarreling, deceit, bad character; whisperers, slanderers, God haters, spiteful, proud, boasters, contrivers of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, promise breakers, unmerciful, who, knowing the judgment of God that they who commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in those who do them. (Romans 1:18-32)

The first step is to reject the knowledge of God which is impressed upon every person's conscience through the evidence of the creation. The loss of conscience toward God eventually leads to the next step: the loss of conscience toward righteous living. God has tolerated loss of conscience toward Himself, but the time comes when He no longer tolerates loss of conscience toward even the appearance of righteousness. There will be a price to pay.

THE HAMMER OF GOD

In 2009 I wrote a piece called "The Hammer of God" (*Media Spotlight*, Vol. 33 - No. 1), in which I stated my belief that the Lord is preparing Islam to chastise the West. It is no coincidence that all the areas in which the West has lost its conscience are anathema to Islam: pornography; abortion; homosexuality; same-sex marriage. These are all punishable by death under sharia. In this regard, Islam is more righteous than the Christianity of the West. And Muslim radicals take delight in pointing this out because it gives them excuse to denounce the West and Christianity.

That's not to say even some of these radicals might not engage in pornography and homosexuality in secret. Or that they might not practice abortion in secret. But were they to be found out, they would forfeit their lives.

That's what gives the Lord legitimate cause to use Islam to chastise those who go by His name. He has given us numerous warnings, not the least of which were the 9/11 attacks and unprecedented natural disasters. At the time this article was written in 2012 it was reported that since 9/11 there have been over 30 attempted terrorist attacks in the United States. Do we think those attempts won't continue? Do we think the Lord will never allow them to succeed?

A February 10 episode of ABC's *What Would You Do?* provided graphic evidence of the problem with western Christianity. Two actors, one in the role of a Christian counselor and the other of a homosexual teen, portray a conversation in a public restaurant in which the "counselor" at the behest of the boy's parents tries to convince the boy that his homosexuality can be "prayed away." Onlookers became upset at the counselor for abusing the boy. One man pulled out the cross he wears as evidence that he is a Christian and that, yes, the "counselor" was wrong. One woman's words to the boy were cryptic: "Your parents might be confused; you aren't. And the world is coming around to that."

Only one couple, Muslims, suggested that the "counselor" was right—that prayer and upbringing in his religion can help him overcome his homosexuality.

This is a sad commentary on how outwardly unrighteous Christianity is in relation to Islam. It is becoming increasingly more difficult to discern any difference between the world and the churches in terms of morality.

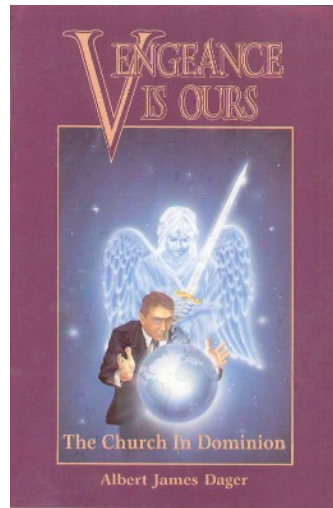
All these things are evidence of a seared conscience. There is nothing true believers in Jesus can do about the direction our culture is heading except to pray and minister to individuals with the intent to bring them to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. If by the grace of God America and the West survive for a time, we should be grateful. But human nature has not changed. If anyone thinks that eventually the Gospel will result in the conversion of the world to a sufficient degree that society will become moral, and that evil will largely be restricted, they have another think coming. Human nature will never change; Mankind is sinful from the start. The Lord tells us that as evil increases, the love of many will grow cold. This means that even those who have loved Him will turn away from Him.

The only refuge we have is the Lord. If we look elsewhere—to politicians, church leaders, even family and friends—we will be disappointed. ❖

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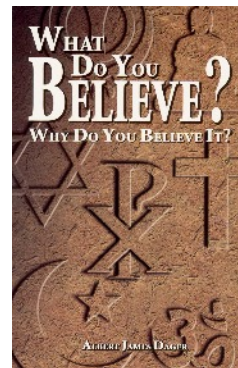
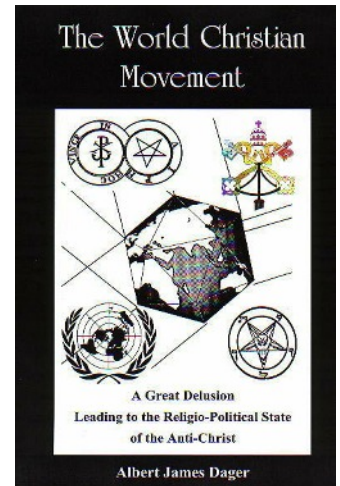
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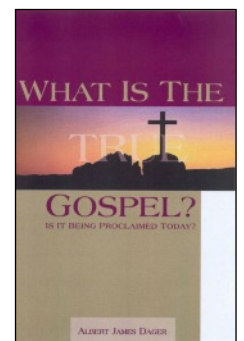
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WHY MEDIA SPOTLIGHT?

Media Spotlight is a ministry to the Body of Christ, founded in 1977 to bring understanding of the ways in which the world shapes our thinking and lifestyles—particularly through the influence of the mass communications media, both secular and religious.

Because God's Word exhorts us to "buy the truth and sell it not" (Prov. 23:23), we do not sell our publications or carry advertising to defray the costs. For those who care to know, it costs approximately \$25 per year to maintain each name on our mailing list. (Foreign is approximately \$35US.) This includes the costs for all our special reports and for our periodical journal, including printing, postage and other expenses related to their publication. Expenses for other aspects of the ministry are met through additional gifts.

When Media Spotlight began in 1977, we were the first ministry on a national scale to specifically address the ungodly nature of the secular media, particularly motion pictures, television, toys, games and myriad other problems that contribute to Christians living no differently than the rest of the world.

The mass media have impacted the Body of Christ as much as they have society. Many Christians are so dependent upon the media that they aren't aware of how lukewarm they have become. We have many testimonies from readers who tell us that, because of Media Spotlight, they no longer compromise their love for God with the need to be entertained. They have become aware of the effect the media have on their thinking, and are now more selective in their choices.

But the problem of ungodliness is not exclusive to the secular media. One of our major concerns is the religious media which present messages contrary to God's Word. Media Spotlight addresses the impact that religious teachers have upon believers in Christ, whether for good or for evil.

Some of the greatest deceptions come with much truth. And God's Word has become subjective to many due to their aversion to the hard truths His Word conveys to us. When Christians face aspects of Scripture that offend them, often, rather than submit to God's Word by going to the Cross and dying to self, they resist the truth and allow their egos to take charge of their responses. This often leads to schisms within the Body of Christ. And who is blamed? Not those resisting the truth, but those who affirm the truth and attempt to appeal to the need for accountability to the Word of God.

It has escaped the understanding of many Christians that what they believe is more often shaped by the teachings and traditions of religious men and institutions than by Scripture. Yet the wisdom of the world is no substitute for God's Word, even if offered from the pulpit or in the Christian media.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 24:24 that in the last days false christs and false prophets would arise and would show great signs and wonders, "insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." He also states in Matthew 24:12 that at the same time, the love of many toward Him would grow cold because evil would increase in the world. If we believe Him, then we would be foolish not to guard ourselves against deception. There is little time to waste in the short span of life granted us by God. We must choose today whom we will serve. ❖